

92

Class

W584

Book

General Theological Seminary Library
Chelsea Square, New York

11/7/24

Purchased from the fund bequeathed to the Seminary by

EUGENE AUGUSTUS HOFFMAN, D. D.

DEAN 1879-1902

Letters to Three Friends

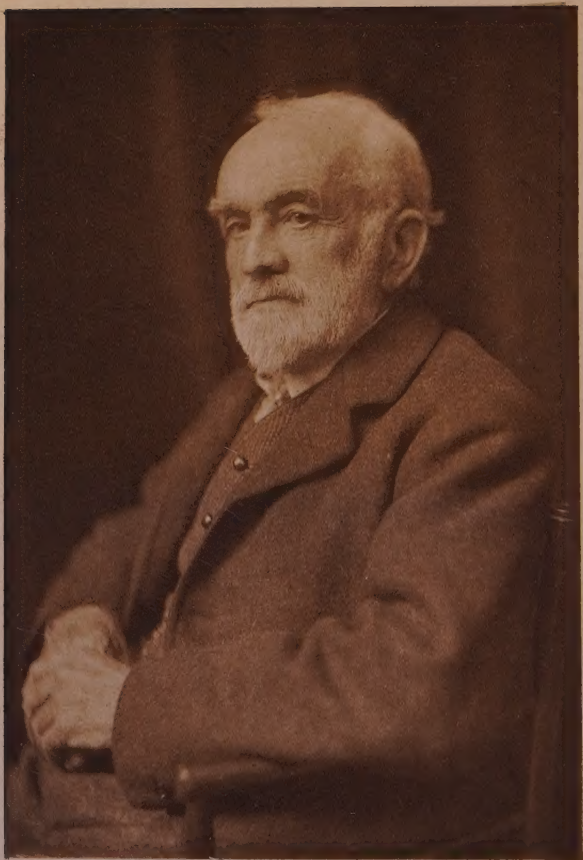


Photo by Fred's Halligan

Letters to Three Friends

BY

WILLIAM HALE WHITE

("MARK RUTHERFORD")

THE HONG KONG LIBRARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

HUMPHREY MILFORD

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

London Edinburgh Glasgow Copenhagen
New York Toronto Melbourne Cape Town
Bombay Calcutta Madras Shanghai

1924

92

W584

76069

PRINTED IN ENGLAND
AT THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
BY FREDERICK HALL

MADE IN GERMANY
YRABILL
BY W. H. H.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
TO MR. AND MRS. COLENUTT, 1872-1908	1
TO MISS PARTRIDGE, 1893-1912	144
TO MR. PHILIP WEBB, 1894-1913	297
INDEX	397

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

WILLIAM HALE WHITE, AETAT 76	<i>Frontispiece</i>
From a photograph by Mr. Frederick Hollyer	
FACSIMILE OF AUTOGRAPH LETTER	<i>To face page 108</i>
*THE STUDY AT GROOMBRIDGE	128
*WILLIAM HALE WHITE, AETAT <i>circ.</i> 78	272
*IN THE STUDY	368

[* See note to the Illustrations in *The Groombridge Diary.*]

LETTERS TO MRS. COLENUTT

[RICHARD COLENUTT, born 31 August 1818, died 8 May 1900.

SARAH FABIAN COLENUTT, born 14 November 1826, died 11 February 1916.

THE first five of the letters here printed, and number 9, were written to Mr. Colenutt. After 24 April 1908 only three short notes are preserved, and these of no special interest. Mrs. Gurnell writes: 'For some years before my dear mother's death her sight failed, . . . her letters became merely notes or messages,¹ and when she realized she could no longer read those she received she probably thought there was no motive in keeping them.'

The earliest letter preserved is dated 1872, but the correspondence must have begun long before that. In April 1913 Mrs. Colenutt wrote to me: 'We had an unbroken friendship of the closest and sweetest kind for over sixty years—dear Hale, such a very handsome young man, he was only about twenty years old when we saw him first.'

None of the letters written by Mrs. Colenutt to my husband appear to have been preserved. This is not surprising, as he made a practice, with certain rare exceptions, of destroying his corre-

¹ See p. 347.

spondence. Letters might be kept for a few days, in some cases a few weeks, sometimes I fancy it may have been until the next letter came, but then there would be an end of them. Nothing more orderly can be conceived than his papers when he died. There was the uncluttered desk and table, the narrow wash-hand-stand drawer with the little bundles of recent answered and unanswered letters, the tin box and the wooden box in which important documents were locked away, and the cabinet in the dining-room where were stored certain treasures and curiosities, amongst other things, for example, his correspondence with Thomas Hutchinson on Wordsworth, some mementoes of a long-ago tour in Germany, and the letter from Carlyle now in the Museum at 5 Cheyne Row.

Perhaps it is hardly necessary to say—though if it is to be said it may as well be said here at the opening of the first series of letters—that a man's private correspondence is not to be judged by the same standard as his published works, that there may be many a hot word written down in the morning and sent off by the evening post, which after six months' cooling for the press and two or three proof corrections would have considerably changed in character or perhaps disappeared altogether:—‘the *stupidest* mistakes,’ as he himself used to call them, pronouncing ‘stupid’ in his own way and with his own peculiar emphasis.

Before reading this series, reference should be

October 1872

3

made to a letter written to Philip Webb, 14 June 1900, and also a letter written to Miss Partridge, 13 Nov. 1905.

D. V. W.

1922.]

I. *To Mr. Colenutt.*

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

13 October 1872.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We got home from Exmouth last Thursday after a most difficult and tedious journey, as you may suppose, seeing that we had to change four times, and Mrs. White, as you know, cannot walk. I thought you would just like to know how I found — and his affairs, as I spent a good deal of time with him. He is very much better; preaches with great force; the people are exceedingly attentive, and generally the world around him looks bright and cheerful. . . . I spoke for him once—not extempore, for I have now not got the confidence for that, through loss of practice.

I was really sad that I could not come to Ryde. Ryde is a second home to us, and I cannot bear that any lengthened time should go by without a visit. . . .

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

2. *To Mr. Colenutt.*

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

21 October 1876.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I enclose Maccall's *Lost Edens*. Only a very few copies were printed, and in consequence I have had some difficulty in getting one. This accounts for the delay. . . .

Tell Kate¹ that the Colenutts were all 'gentlemen' in ancient times. In Worsley's *History of the Isle of Wight*, quarto, published in 1781, I find that the manor of Pann in the island was granted in the seventh year of Edward VI to Leonard Brown and John Tropps 'as trustees for Thomas Carew, Esquire, who sold it to Colnett', and in the year 1629 Sir John Oglander wrote a list of the gentlemen of the island and better class of farmers who belonged to a society which used to dine together twice a week at a house on St. George's Down. In the list amongst the gentlemen is 'Mr. Barnabie Colnett of Pann.' The name is also mentioned elsewhere in the island history. The two oldest names in the records of families now existing are, so far as my knowledge goes, Oglander and Wavell, but probably you would recognize others. The book is interesting, and amongst other plates contains a picture of old Appuldurcombe

¹ Their second daughter.

House which the owner ought religiously to have preserved.

Best love to all. We are all pretty well, excepting miserable colds arising from the sudden change of weather.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

3. *To Mr. Colenutt.*

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

27 January 1880.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have got from the United States two photographs of Emerson, and I send you one. I shall frame mine and hang it up as a perpetual incitement, in its perfect calm, to the acquisition of a temper which the older I get the more I discern to be the one thing blessed and needful. . . .

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

4. *To Mr. Colenutt.*

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

28 September 1880.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We got home late last night. I am very glad to hear the shoulder is getting better. I shall not venture to see Mrs. Colenutt for some time to come, for I am afraid she will think that if it had

not been for me the accident would not have happened. It was a mere chance, however, that it did not happen to me. I did not use my stick as you did, and it was the plunging about those rocks with the stick that was the cause of the mischief. I don't think it was what people call 'doing too much,' because no other limb or joint gave way.

I am very vexed I made a mistake about Wordsworth's House at Rydal Mount. It is so long since I went there that I confused it with the one next to it. You actually did see the chimneys of the real Rydal Mount, but I pointed out as the place where Wordsworth lived a cottage which adjoined his. I send you a photograph of the Mount to make amends.

Willie¹ and I went to Ruskin's. He was not at home, but we saw Brantwood. It is the loveliest situation I have seen in that part of the world.

Best love to all. Tell Mrs. Colenutt I will offer with all ceremony a propitiatory sheep, or if she prefers it an ox, to make my peace with her.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

You will be glad to hear that Willie has been elected house surgeon to the Evelina Hospital for Children. It is his first *paid* appointment. Those at Guy's have been honorary. There were twenty-six candidates.

¹ His eldest son.

April 1882

7

5. To Mr. Colenutt.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

30 April 1882.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . Emerson, you see, has not belied his philosophy, but has died like a child going to sleep.

I hope you have been reading Froude's *Carlyle*. I was obliged to read it hastily, but I went through it with a burning fervour. Carlyle was so thoroughly truthful that we may be sure he would never assume a self not his own, even in the presence of his orthodox mother. That being so, his letters to her, insisting on the essential sameness of all that she and he believed, are most precious. The longer I live, the more of that spirit comes to me, and I recognize the inestimable worth of Christianity, not merely in forming a class of character, which, without it, would never have been, but in bringing to the front certain divine truths which are of primary importance in themselves, and, what is more, are truths above all other truths in their importance to us as a family of human beings. For example—Christianity dwells with tremendous emphasis on the difference between right and wrong. Its whole system stands on it. Christ dies to save us from the consequences of our ill doing. This is not a Greek idea or a philosophical idea. We owe it to the Jewish race. Carlyle in this was to the very core a Christian.

I might name other truths—such as that of monotheism with a diversity of attribute and so on ; but we all of us can think of quite enough to make us look with little sympathy on the miserable creatures, who, blind to all the Past, think to abolish Christianity and substitute arithmetic and geography. . . .

Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

6.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

12 June 1882.

MY DEAR MRS. COLENU TT,

. . . Tell Kate I have had a great treat this week. I have seen Madame Modjeska and Sarah Bernhardt, our two greatest living actresses. My stagnant blood has not been so stirred for a long time. I never saw such genius on the stage. Could not Kate manage to come up to London? Sarah Bernhardt will be here for one more week only. Willie will be proud to act as Kate's cavalier and she could sleep here.

. . . A friend of Tyndall's was here yesterday. He told me that Tyndall is greatly disturbed at the false impression given by Froude as to the relationship between Carlyle and his wife. It is altogether untrue. She was by no means the drudge and 'put-upon' creature which Froude

June 1882

9

makes her to be. Froude once more has sacrificed the truth to his desire to do something pictorial.

Here ends my budget. I always conclude with a prayer as is proper and pious. It is always a supplication to the superior powers—by whom I mean S. F. C. and R. C. of Union Street—that they would honour us with their presence. If I could not see you, might I not be permitted to have your husband from Saturday to Monday?

I cannot write any more. I am tormented with rheumatism which has been digging at my shoulder with an almost ecclesiastical refinement of torture for more than a month.

Best love to all from Mrs. White and myself.

Ever yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

7.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

21 October 1882.

MY DEAR MRS. COLENUTT,

Just one word to thank you and Mary¹ for the portraits. They are lovely. Children and the art are both perfect, and the quick vivacious life so characteristic of the mother and so faithfully transmitted by her to her offspring is as well rendered as photography can render it. I should have written before but have been immersed in a—not a sea, nothing so sweet—puddle of small

¹ Their eldest daughter, Mrs. Gurnell.

troubles consequent on both our servants leaving. Three weeks ago I had a notable week at Porlock with my friend Mr. Arthur Hughes, who went there painting. It is 12 miles E. of Lynmouth, in a country of glens, moor, mountain and water, a strangely beautiful, untouched land of romance.

Ask your husband if he has read George's *Progress and Poverty*. I have just gone through it twice. It is a great epoch-making book, denounced furiously of course, but intensely interesting. It is being sold in the streets here for 4½d. and the edition I have is the 25th!

It is all about political economy, but the conclusions are a revelation, and it has dropped a seed into the minds of thinking men which will split the rocks. I have been unable to let go of it, and was up at half-past four this morning to finish it. Whether you yourself will care for the discussions in the earlier part, on which, however, everything depends, I do not know, but I am sure the last few chapters would pin you.

. . . Ever yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

8.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

17 March 1883.

MY DEAR MRS. COLENUTT,

It is very good of you to take such interest in anything you imagine to be mine. I should like to know what induces such an imagination?

March 1883

II

I have never owned the book you name, and should be quite justified in denying its authorship.¹

Vexed, of course, I could never be with anything you do, but nevertheless I want you to undo something you have done. Please get the book back from —.

Tell —, *not as message from me* but as one from yourself, that you understand I disclaim it and that he had better not say a word to me about it. I have a particular reason for not wishing to put him under any obligation to make any observations to me on that subject, and he would certainly feel such an obligation in the case of a volume acknowledged by me as mine.

I am now really engaged on something which will be fathered by me. It is such a labour as I shall never be able to undertake again. It is a translation of Spinoza, and I hope after months of toil to get it to the printer next week. I am afraid that it will not be a success. It will, I know, prove too abstruse and scientific for what is called 'the general reader'.

. . . Tell Kate—as the best judge of fiction I know—to read *A Lost Love* by Ashford Owen. It was written by a woman many years ago. It is the only book she wrote, and it is autobiographical. It has just been republished.

Ever yours affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

¹ This must be *The Autobiography*, published 1881. See the *Groombridge Diary*, pp. 51 and 73.

9. *To Mr. Colenutt.*

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

15 April 1883.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

My doctor tells me that I must take a holiday. So the week after next I propose to leave home for a fortnight, and I want to know if you and your dear wife could go with me. Otherwise I must go alone. At this time of year we shall have no difficulty about lodgings. There are three places of which I have thought. The Scilly Islands—Buttermere—and Carlyle's country. I will leave the decision to you. I cannot walk much. I want rest more than anything. The Scilly Islands recommend themselves on account of the climate and lovely sea—Buttermere on account of its scenery, and Carlyle's country because I have been mad lately to behold Ecclefechan and Annan and Craigenputtock. . . .

Ever yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

10.

17 Katherinen Strasse,
Freiburg in Breisgau,
Germany.

[July 1883.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Here I am at last in a German pension on the borders of the Black Forest. After torturing

myself with the spur for weeks, I did at last summon up courage to put myself on board the boat for Flushing last Saturday night. Of the journey across it is best to say nothing. I was not sick, but four persons at sea in one cabin, three of them snoring and one meditating from eleven o'clock to seven, is a spectacle which ought to move the gods to pity—that is to say for the meditative one. The next day I reached Bonn; slept in a bedroom overlooking the Rhine, and on the following day went up the Rhine to Mayence. This took us about ten hours. Oh, that marvellous river! The banks are wonderful enough, but what excited me more than anything was just what excited me so much before, and that is the rushing broad mass of greenish yellow water, the loveliest colour, and pouring along with such silent mighty force! Your husband would have been greatly interested in the vine culture. The Rudesheimer mountain is actually terraced right up to the top with retaining walls to keep the precious earth from slipping. It must have cost hundreds of pounds an acre. The Johannisberg, which we also saw, produces annually wine of the value of £8,000 from 40 acres.

At Mayence we stayed a night and paid a visit to Heidelberg on the Tuesday, saw the castle and the country round. Inside the castle they show you Luther's wedding-ring, a sacred and symbolical object. There are curiosities and portraits

innumerable. The castle itself is one of the most exquisite examples of the Renaissance architecture in Germany—that is to say what remains of it, for everything noble is in Germany in ruins. The land has been the battlefield of heroes and robbers generation after generation down to the time of the French Revolution. One of these heroes or robbers during the Revolutionary epoch sent the best part of Heidelberg castle aloft with gunpowder.

From Heidelberg down to Freiburg in about seven hours. Willie had an introduction to two of the professors here, one of whom recommended us to a most excellent pension where we live in perfect cleanliness and on very good food for about 33 shillings a week apiece, including board and lodging. This is not dear, is it? It is one of the brightest, cheerfulest places you ever saw, and with the loveliest country around it. Half an hour's walk from our house takes you up to the top of the Schlossberg, from which you see all the broad plain of the Rhine, the Schwarzwald mountains and the still loftier Vosges in the distance. A half day's walk, I am told, will bring us on to the Feldberg face to face with the Alps.

Everything is strange, novel and foreign. Baden is a Catholic district. Crucifixes stand by the roadside. The mighty minster, unsurpassed in all Germany for Gothic delicacy, is Catholic, and all day long priests are doing something; what, I do

not know. Baden too is a land of grapes. We walk through vineyards. We live at a height of about a thousand feet above the sea, and the exhilaration of the air is indescribable. It is not a Bethesda pool but a Bethesda mountain. We are emphatically in Germany. Freiburg owns about 30,000 people, but it has all the culture of London, a university, a medical school, higher schools for boys and girls, and the education is about half what it costs in England. Emphatically too in Germany because of the military ways of the people. These I do not like. Soldiers are everywhere. Every waiter has been through the army and walks erect as if he were on drill. Of course this has its attractive side, but I lean rather to our muddled unsoldierlike anarchic England, for the rigidity of the German bureaucracy is begetting a terrible series of difficulties—socialism and what not.

This letter is written in patches. Last night I saw the sunset from the Roskopf, a mountain near here overlooking the Rhine plain, the Rhine itself and the Vosges in the extreme distance. It was a sight such that if a man had seen it once, he might well say he had not lived in vain. The whole level district through which the Rhine flows was flooded with golden sunlight, and the Vosges were very dim yellow or yellowish cloud colour rising right into the sky. Halfway between them and us was the mountain Kaiserstuhl in dark

purple. Our own land is beautiful, but this was a new order of beauty not to be preconceived, and adding to one's estimate of Nature's capacity. On our way home we came to a shrine miraculously endued with the power of curing sore eyes. The cure lies in a spring in the crypt. It is extraordinary to see such education and such credulity lying side by side. I fancy, though, they do not *mix*. The education we owe to Luther and the wedding-ring I saw, and the credulity to the old man at Rome; and the educated are mostly not Papists. At least the majority of the devout in the minster and churches are poor peasants. What a dreadful garrulous gossip I am. I am afraid I have bored you, but my sheet, happily for you, is ended. Best love to all the children and your dear husband. Willie sends his best love.

Ever yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

II.

On the railway between Cologne and
Flushing.

Wednesday.

[8 August 1883.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Here I am on my way homeward, trying to beguile the tedium of the journey amidst the jolting through this flat uninteresting country by continuing my last note. The difficulty of the task will probably cause me to consume half of the

hours which have to be got through before we reach the steamboat. Home, I hope, will be attained to-morrow morning. Willie, whom I have left at Freiburg, wanted very much to see a little more of the Black Forest, so about 10 days ago we started on a walking tour. We had for a goal the first day the mountain Feldberg, just upon 5,000 feet. Our route lay through the famous Höllenthal, a pass at the base of magnificent perpendicular rocks with a lovely rushing stream. It is a military road made by the Austrians 100 years ago, and poor Marie Antoinette went to France through it. I purposely omit all descriptions of scenery for two reasons, firstly because I cannot describe the indescribable, and partly because I cannot work my fine passages into the halting places of the train and I am afraid of a horrid jerk at some railway points, just when I am beginning my loftiest flights into the sublime. On our way to the Feldberg we called at a charming German public-house. We had two pints of milk, Willie had $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of wine, and we both together consumed a good-sized loaf and about $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of the most delicious butter. The bill was fourteen pence. This is about the scale in rural Germany. I could live here, away from the tourist haunts, for £200 a year and keep up my present establishment. The land literally flows with good wine, milk and honey—such milk and such honey!! The inn at which we stayed before our climb lies

in a true sub-alpine valley. My bedroom window looked on to pine-covered slopes, and below them murmurs a true sub-alpine brook. Fancy such a place for me—an epicure in bedrooms! The ascent of the Feldberg was in one sense a mistake, for when we got to the top we were shrouded in mist and could not make out what was only a dozen yards ahead of us. But the journey thither was worth all the pains, for it was a showery day and the spectacle of the clouds slowly forming and reforming themselves, scattering and reuniting all round us, revealing sunny spots of pasture and farms below and then shutting them out again was—those horrid junctions with their cross-rails!

I slept in a kind of wooden restaurant near the summit, went to the Feldberger See in the afternoon before going to bed, and got up at four the next morning to see the sunrise. I had a five miles' walk out and in before breakfast, but the result was a scene branded into me for ever, for it was perfectly clear towards the east and south, and so there were let into the panorama all the Rhine mountains in Switzerland.

Down again to the inn at the foot. This took me six hours. Next morning by diligence to Neustadt, where most of the Black Forest watch-making is carried on. We went over a factory and saw men—so great is the subdivision of labour—doing nothing all day long but turning one particular spindle, the turning of a spindle occupying

about 20 seconds. This taught us contentment with monotony, and made me wonder at the power of human nature to exist even with cheerfulness under most adverse conditions and to bend itself in to the roughest outside and live in peace with it.

Next day to St. Blasien by diligence and through St. Blasien also by diligence to Albbruck, a station on the line to Constance. The diligence road from St. Blasien to Albbruck is the most extraordinary and the dizziest track on which I ever found myself. Imagine a vast chasm miles long, with perpendicular sides and a roaring river at the bottom, the aforesaid track being a ledge cut down on the rock half-way up! Imagine the diligence with its four horses and jangling bells sweeping round the corners—often at right angles—of the precipice, and you won't wonder if I often thought what would a certain lady at Ryde of my acquaintance say if she were perched up here. At no fewer than five points the road cannot get round the rocks and bores through them. From Albbruck to Schaffhausen. Here we beheld the Falls of the Rhine. This on the whole was the crown of all our sightseeing. The whole mighty Rhine goes bodily over a granite shelf. Long before it comes to its final plunge it is agitated as if by anticipation into a series of whirlpools. These are the rapids, and the water boils and leaps in magnificent exultation. You can *think* what

a granite wall is, you can think what a broad river is, but you cannot form any anticipatory picture in the smallest degree of how the said river will behave and what it will do and become when it descends that ledge. Nature is not to be forecast in that way. And then too it is the Rhine, the colour of the purest lemon juice, just a trifle lighter perhaps. We crossed in a boat just below the falls and saw the rainbow which lives in the foam at the bottom whenever the sun shines. The boatmen asked us if we should like to try and land on the rock which actually splits the fall. We said 'yes' and they wrapped waterproofs round us. After the most delicate display of steersmanship, and a fearful tossing accompanied by a sousing, we really did get on the rock and there we were abreast of, and one may really say in the fall itself! No more. We bathed in the Rhine. It is of course only possible to swim one way, and the swimmers are protected by a fence which prevents them from being carried to the rapids. It was the most exciting swim, though, I have had for a long time.

From Schaffhausen to Zurich. This was a failure. The day was so foggy we could see nothing, and Zurich itself is nothing better than a Swiss Margate. So after a swim in the lake we turned northwards again, Willie having been dropped at Freiburg and I reaching the spot where now I am, amusing myself by this childish scribble.

One word more, though, about the Rhinefall. Its colour alters with the angle of the sun. In the afternoon I happened to turn towards it as I was sitting down, and it was transparent or rather lucid emerald. If you look [at] it, you first say 'lovely'; the next exclamation is 'what perfect purity', and then you are smitten with its majestic force. It is the combination of irresistible might with delicacy like that of a young birch leaf which is so attractive. The key-note is green and in that key the river produces a thousand differences from the green of the midsummer elm through never-to-be imitated gray-greens caused by intimate mixture of foam, up to white of snow full of sunlight. Below the falls the stream spreads itself out in peace and goes on its way.

Heard the Catholic service in Cologne cathedral this morning. I was again struck with the *art* with which it subdues or would subdue men's minds. It was high mass. The music, which was accompanied by the organ, had no melody in it. It was a most depressing monotonous 'bumming,' to use one of Tennyson's Lincolnshire words. I would have given all the tone of the organ to have heard one human *tune*. The priest too turning his back on the worshippers is such a symbol. The Jesuits, though, are perfect orators. I have listened to two Jesuit sermons preached to great cathedral congregations. Both were entirely extempore, and as far as the mere art of speaking

goes, I have never heard anything more finished save perhaps from Gladstone and Roebuck.

Finis.

Last note.—If you were a converted character—but you are not, for you don't believe in the 'Quicunque vult' of the *Childe Harold*, the *Corsair*, &c., that is to say of the ever to be adored Byron—you would by me be compelled to read Jeaffreson's *The Real Lord Byron*. But you will, I know, die in your ungodliness, and I will say nothing about the book save this, that it has most deeply interested me.

. . . Ever yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

You won't forget in your criticisms the circumstances under which this work of art, i.e. my letter, is composed.

Thursday morning.

Just got to Victoria. I agree with you about sea voyages at night, especially such a night as last, when it was impossible to remain on deck. The sea was very rough. We all lay in our cots down below, four in a cabin no bigger than a wardrobe. A horrid sense of *shut-downness*. I was not sick, but nearly everybody else was. My fellow wardrobe comrades were. It was like being sealed up in a place beginning with 'h' and with the added malady of the *mal de mer*. Nevertheless after three weeks in a foreign land it was refreshing to hear my own countrymen sick in their native language.

.

12.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

21 April 1884.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was very glad to get a letter from you. My own will, I am afraid, be brief. I was to have gone to Plymouth last Thursday, and it was arranged that I should spend the Sunday at Exeter; but I was not well and could not leave home, waited upon by an old enemy who need not be named. I paid a visit to the doctor, and he is imperative in ordering me to take wine. Dr. Pavy told me the same thing, but I refused to obey. As my consultation with the second doctor was intended as an experiment to see if he would confirm the first, I suppose I must now yield, though I do not much believe in it.

I was very sorry to hear of your poor boy's disappointment anent the fossils. But, alas, if the dear child is to break his heart every time he finds that what he has cherished, or, maybe, as his own offspring, is treated with neglect, where will he be when he is 52, the present writer's age? Life is one long series of such checks. For example, I try here to keep a spring clean. The very people who use it, in fact the only people who use it, are the people who choke it up with old boots, Australian meat cans and worse filth. But I keep it clean nevertheless, simply because there is such a thing

as duty which exists and is imperative, apart from all other motives. It is a divine acquisition when a man has learned that, whether people reward him or not, he ought to walk the straight path—in the light, as Carlyle would say, of the Eternities—not of a never-ending future, but of that Eternal truth which is the veritable I AM.

You would have liked to have been here a night or two ago. Morris, Earthly Paradise Morris came to dinner with us. He is unlike any fancy picture which the imagination might draw of him. He is broad-shouldered, ruddy, wears a blue shirt with no neck-tie, and talks with great vehemence; oftentimes with a kind of put-on roughness I think—as if he meant to say ‘If you think that I am an Earthly-Paradisiacal creature with wings you are egregiously mistaken.’ Nevertheless he was very interesting and humorous. Some of the tapestry now in progress at his works is simply wonderful. I never saw the like.

Tell your husband to buy a paper called *Justice* for last Saturday. He will see in it a discussion between Bradlaugh and Hyndman on Socialism; Bradlaugh against it, and Hyndman for it. It will give him a good notion of Bradlaugh as a debater.

Interrupted. Mr. and Mrs. Hughes came in. Goodbye.

. . . Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

June 1884

25

13.

Mrs. Mumford's, Bank, St. Mary's,
Scilly, Cornwall.

6 June 1884.

MY DEAR MRS. COLENUTT,

I have just got your note, and as the post goes at 7.30 a.m. I must be brief. I got —— to come here with me the day before yesterday. It is the strangest, out-of-the-way, sea-swept, wind-swept place you can imagine, lonely, granitic, tropically-flavoured—aloes and palms for example growing in the open. How we both long for S. F. C. and R. C. of Ryde!

I should have written to your husband to join us, but his last note was such a melancholy refusal to leave home any more that I dare not. There is still room, however, for repentance if he likes to telegraph and say he will come. . . .

We both send our love to you, your husband and the household of faith.

Yours most affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

14.

28 July 1884.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I send you just a word to say that Willie is engaged. We always thought he would not marry, but the lady has at last presented herself. She is a Miss Fripp, daughter of a painter and secretary to the Water Colour Society. She is

now at Girton, where she has greatly distinguished herself, and she took two entrance scholarships—one from her school and one from the college. She is singularly unobtrusive, quiet, gentle and unconscious, and she is just 21 years old. I am sure you would love her. Willie wished me to write to you, and now I have discharged my task. The final announcement came to us last week, although I had suspected for some time what was going on.

. . . As for myself, . . . I have been the victim of the strangest emotions, the description of which will not edify you, and so I forbear. One goes on living and thinking all one's life without knowing what lies in us ; when suddenly an event, a shock comes, and we stand revealed to ourselves astonished at the presence of what we never suspected. The steel plate is wrought with care and to all appearance is solid throughout and free from flaw, but lo ! the hammer is swung, the test is applied and it is mere sheet-glass. I am struck dumb with my own ignorance of myself.

It was a most exciting week for me last week, and my head has suffered most painfully for it. A grand entertainment was given at the Sutton Public Hall by the Sutton Girls' High School. Molly ¹ was asked to take Malcolm in a scene from *Macbeth*. I hesitated, but at last consented. The little mite appeared on the stage before all the

¹ His only daughter.

people, and declaimed and acted to perfection. Her voice was heard clear and clean by everybody. The dramatization too of the passages was admirable, though I say it. Of course she had been carefully trained. But I!! I sat and listened in a cold sweat of terror.

. . . Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

15.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.
12 September 1884.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am going, if all be well, to Portsmouth next Friday for about a week on business. If you are not too busy, I shall come over to Ryde on the Sunday morning following—the 21st—but if anybody will be there, I shall not come. I say this, because I know Kate's marriage is imminent, and I don't want to be in Union Street just before the wedding; when perhaps friends will be with you, and you will be altogether pre-occupied. I should leave Ryde the same evening. Send me just a line to say how it shall be. Tell me the exact truth, because I should really prefer to see you later on in the year, if the wedding preparations are going forward or wedding-guests are assembling. For one thing, weddings always make me melancholy-contemplative, and I fall into the Jaques mood—

'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine,

And after one hour more 'twill be eleven,
And so, from hour to hour, &c., &c.

. . . Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

16.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

2 October 1884.

MY DEAR MRS. COLENUTT,

We shall think of you all on Monday, you may be sure. I specially will think of you, for my wretched temperament exaggerates the suffering of such situations to such a degree that even the mere anticipation is unbearable. It is horrible selfishness to put one's own self to the front so much and to think so little of the happiness of others, but I cannot for the life of me get the better of it. I try hard, nevertheless.

Will you send me Kate's Whitby address? I will send the Tennyson there. I suppose Mr. Wright's name is as I have spelt it. I don't want to make a mistake over the inscription in the first volume.

Best love from Mrs. White and myself to your dear husband, yourself, and the children. Kate has not yet sent me Mr. Wright's portrait as she promised, and we should also very much like to have one of Fabian's ¹ lady. Please put full name on the back of each. I like to be exact.

Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

¹ Their eldest son.

April 1885

29

17.

[Admiralty.]

10 April 1885.

MY DEAR MRS. COLENUTT,

I shall be most delighted to see your husband, as you know—provided, that is to say, the work here leaves me alive. It is perfectly awful, and from morning to night there is nothing but an incessant downpour of telegrams and urgent letters. Much of our difficulty is caused by the anxious desire of the ‘city’ people to serve patriotically their country, i. e. to swindle it.

. . . I am very sorry to hear you have been ill. I have been almost prostrated with my old complaints, inability to eat, drink, or sleep, and depression of the darkest shade. My doctor is away, and I had to see Sir Andrew Clark. . . . I want rest, but I cannot give up now.

. . . Ever yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

18.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

10 January 1886.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

My cousin William has just left me. He came to stay with us for three or four days, and I need hardly say we greatly enjoyed his company. He has been unwell—was seized with a kind of fainting attack one Sunday night after a very

trying day, and sets it down to a cigarette he smoked! That preaching twice on a Sunday is simply suicidal. However, he got much better here and was quite cheerful—a great blessing to me, suffering from the extraordinary absence of sunlight during these last few months. Never has London to my knowledge been so dismal. However, I have seen two things worth seeing: one being Mr. Jones's play at the Princess's of *Hoodman Blind*, and the other the Millais Exhibition. The play is a thoroughly noble piece of work, and it is consolatory to think that such a performance is beheld by so many people. I told Mr. Jones that I thought the good done by his melodrama was greater than the harm done by all the London sermons in a year. This is very strong commendation and I fear exaggerated. Yet I don't know—the harm done by sermons now is not so very great. Latterly I have been brought into contact with many church people. Some friends who have taken a fancy to Molly through their daughters who were at school with her are very churchy and Tory, but they are very human, very affectionate, and very sincere. A lady came to dine with us when William was with us who sacrifices a good deal of herself to better the condition of the poor in Drury Lane. She belongs to the Church of England, and a more attractive creature I do not know.

Partly this is due to the fact that ecclesiastical theories cease to affect people as much as they did

in times gone by, and partly to another fact, that, after all, they are but a dress ; often disappointing and suppressive, but possibly covering a warmer heart than those possess who are covered by a more natural costume. The heart is the thing ! I have been reading lately Dickens's *Christmas Carol* with such fervour that my admiration for Dickens grew almost to worship, and if there is one thing more prominent than another in that divine little book—as genuine a piece of inspiration as ever poured forth from the Fountain of all inspiration—it is the utter simplicity of the characters and circumstances which, nevertheless, are as grand as those of *Paradise Lost*.

Go, little girl, with the poor coarse hand.
I have my lesson, shall understand.

And so I did, I hope. At any rate I felt it at the time as deeply as anything in the Revised Version which I have gone all through now.

I was not sorry altogether your husband was so scurvily treated by the Ryde burgesses at the last municipal election, and trust he has more leisure.

Molly's education now devolves on me partly. She has left school, but continues French, German, music, and English. The English I look after. We have begun the *Bible for the Young*, accompanied by the corresponding chapters in the R.V., Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, Huxley's *Physiography*, a manual of *Astronomy*, and Green's *History of*

England. Of course I merely superintend, as I get so little time.

Best love to your husband and all the children.

Mrs. White sends her best love too and thanks for the sweet flowers.

Ever yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

19.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

28 November 1886.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am very glad to hear your husband is getting better. It says a great deal for his constitution and power of self-recovery that he was not wrecked completely. Let us console ourselves with this reflection.

. . . Willie is to be married in about five weeks' time. We are getting to know Miss Fripp now. She is so quiet with strangers, that it was rather difficult at first to see her really ; but she is wearing into intimacy, and we find her very true, very simple, and very affectionate. She belongs to a different world to ours ; but perhaps is none the worse in the Almighty's sight for that. I hope Willie will succeed. It is a bold game to play ; but after all one must risk something. My tendencies are all towards making everything secure ; properly protecting lines of communication, and covering the retreat ; but then America would

never have been discovered by such a creature as I am.

We have had an awful time of it last week—fog that might almost be cut in blocks and carted about, and stinking with smoke. I had literally to feel my way home one night, and thought of Ryde, and wondered if the stars were shining there.

. . . Affectionately yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

20.

[Admiralty.]
27 January 1887.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Would not Charlie¹ like to see the Stanley show of bicycles and tricycles? It opens to-day and will continue during next week. If he will come up on Saturday, call at the office for me about 2.15, I will take him to the theatre; he can go back to Carshalton, stay over Sunday, and we will inspect the machines on Monday.

During the winter I have been trying to learn to ride the bicycle,² and have at last succeeded, but of course the innate depravity of human nature at present displays itself forcibly, and I deviate from rectitude apparently for no reason whatever. You

¹ Their third son.

² Days of the high 'bone-shaker'. In a note to Mrs. Cole-nutt, undated but probably October 1872, he writes of making a journey on his tricycle.

would hardly believe how difficult it is for a man of 55 to learn. The body has lost its flexibility and power of balance. Once I fell off and was strapped up all round my chest—could do nothing for a fortnight—and on a second occasion I was pitched suddenly on a heap of stones, rendering my hands incapable for a week. But the worst of all was that for a month I did not seem to make the slightest progress. However, I made up my mind that I would persevere day after day till a certain date fixed far ahead, and that then I would yield if not successful. At last I had vouchsafed to me a ray of hope and then got into smoother waters. The roads, too, have been all against me, as bad as they could possibly be.

Do you know why I went on? Do you remember the sarcasm applied by a certain lady who shall be nameless to the ‘armchairified’ tricycle riders who went up Union Street? What would that lady have had to answer for, if I had been killed!

But partly also the reason was that I am scientifically curious as to the limits of a man’s powers, and more particularly middle-age powers, and do not like defeat. Shelley used to say, ‘I always go on till I am stopped’. I went on a good deal after I was stopped—by stone-heaps to wit.

. . . Affectionately yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

21.

18 August 1887.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . I am much distressed about your husband. Hobbes, the great philosopher, said that compassion was nothing more than a lively feeling of the possibility of the suffering we compassionate being some day our own. This cannot be true, for I have already *had* nine months blasted by stomachic derangement to such a degree that I have longed intensely for the end of life. No tongue can tell the mental agony I have gone through. Doctors cannot help you. How can they? Abernethy, the famous old physician, says that the stomach with many persons decays with years; gets old, in fact, and what medicine can renew old age? This is the most sensible thing I have read on the subject. He adds that the only remedy, and this is only partial, is to be extremely particular in *quantity*; not to trust the appetite as a guide in this matter; to eat and drink nothing found to disagree; never to eat and drink together, and to take or rather sip water three hours after meals.

It is curious that this advice of Abernethy's remains unchanged law to the present day. My doctor tells me just the same, adding that the water should be hot, and no liquid food should ever be gulped.

I have found no shadow of relief except through

these simple rules, and even they have only power to mitigate.

Abernethy resolutely restricted many of his patients to 12 and 16 oz. of solid food daily of the most nourishing kind, and quotes Cornaro, an Italian gentleman, whose life I have in my little library. His health broke down when he was about 33, and he had the wit to discover what was wrong. He lived in perfect health on 12 oz. daily with 2 oz. of wine till he was about 100 years old.

But, as I observed before, nothing but a miracle can heal or restore an organ debilitated through *age*. This is the case with me and my friend Richard.

With best love,

Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

Don't suppose I mean to prescribe *anything*. I am too careful to do that. Each person must find his own salvation or rather his own mode of alleviating his damnation.

22.

28 September 1887.

MY DEAR MRS. COLENUTT,

I forgot to say in my last note that Liss is the nearest station for you to Selborne. I have been there and into White's house. I suppose you saw the death of poor Jefferies in the newspapers. Every scrap of his is precious. Just look for example at his last article, the last he ever wrote,

the one in *Longman's Magazine* for this month, or rather October. Never was there such a naturalist and lover of the country. His two or three novels, poor fellow, were written, they say, for a living. I have not read them as yet. You know all about Jefferies though, I dare say.

In about three weeks, if I am no better, I must go away for a little bit. I think I shall try Scotland and see if that will do me any good.

Would that you or your husband had some business there!

Faithfully and affectionately yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

23.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

5 October 1887.

MY DEAR MRS. COLENUTT,

Many thanks for your invitation. I may see you for a day or so. I don't know yet.

Will you ask your husband to send one guinea or any sum small or great which he can afford to the Richard Jefferies fund. The widow, who is a very economical woman, will be able to live on the £100 a year granted by Government, and keep her two children, but at her death the pension ceases, and what her friends want to do is to raise a fund to educate these children and provide for them in case of their mother's decease.

The address of the treasurer of the fund is Mr. W. C. Alexander, 24 Lombard Street.

I told you to read the article in *Longman*. Read also *Wild Life in a Southern County*.

To me chapter iv has few rivals in beauty of pure English prose and in suggestiveness. . . .

Faithfully and affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

24.

30 November 1887.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was very glad for the sake of Ryde to hear that it had so worthy a chief magistrate. Whether I am equally glad for the magistrate himself I am not sure, because I do not know how much good a mayor can do. If he can do any, then I am glad for your husband's sake personally, for I am certain that to be able to say that you have been of some use is worth all the selfish pleasure in the world.

. . . I am back again at work, as you see. I am a little better, but whether I shall ever be myself again I cannot tell. I have had eleven months of terrible depression and complete nervous exhaustion, taking the form of all kinds of distressing forebodings and delusions. What the cause of it has been nobody knows, but it is clearly some strain on the nervous system—as there were other symptoms—due *perhaps* to excessive exercise.

However, the rest at Ilkley, the complete change

in living and the moorland air did me good, and if I again lose ground I must try six months' absolute repose.

It is wonderful how much misery can be got out of a human being.

. . . Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

25.

Wells House, Ilkley.¹
22 February 1888.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Just a word to say that, if I am not forestalled, I should like to give Rick ² his family Bible. You will let me know if I am in time.

I never saw such snow as there is here. The main road past our house to Keighley has been blocked since Sunday, and no cart nor horse has been across since then. There is a lane not far from us with five-feet stone walls on either side, and it is *full*, as far as I can see, very nearly level with the wall tops.

The beauty of the drifts on the moors is surpassingly wonderful. The wind has sifted, woven and twisted the snow into fantastic and exquisite curvature with exhaustless variation.

. . . Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

¹ See letter 30 November 1887, and compare the *Groombridge Diary*, p. 171, 'I have been there twice'.

² Their second son.

26.

Wells House, Ilkley.

5 March 1888.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Mrs. White wishes me to thank you for your note to her announcing the arrival of another grandson to perpetuate still further a noble race.

Last Sunday the road to Keighley was open for the first time for three weeks.

Best love to all. I waver a good deal ; a trifle better some days and depressed to despair on others.

Ever faithfully,

W. HALE WHITE.

27.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.

4 December 1888.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I suppose you saw the announcement of Maccall's death. I went to his funeral. I shrank very much from the duty, but it was clearly a duty, and now I am glad I was there, for I was the sole representative of his elder friends. His sufferings towards the end were terrible, and he prayed for release. I could perhaps, if I had the time and audience, say something useful about him, but I have neither one nor the other.¹

¹ 22 October 1875 he had written to another friend : ' I was glad to find Maccall had been with you. His isolation tempts

We are in perplexities manifold just now. Ernest's¹ works are burnt down, and I must remove him somewhere—where I cannot tell. My house is sold, and whither we shall go I know not. It was necessary to get rid of it because of official uncertainties, which, however, no sooner had I parted with it, seemed, instead of getting clearer, to curdle themselves into a darker confusion than ever.

The problem with me is very complicated . . . partly because of the difficulty of finding house or lodgings which suit Mrs. White, but mainly through the old trouble, lack of health. I am now writing to you, as a relief, in the early morning, having

him at times into apparent antagonism to that with which he is really in accord, but contact with his friends brings him right again. I have the greatest regard for him, for his heroic self-denial, for his satisfaction with his own thoughts and with the simple life which he leads. Amongst the crowd which struggles in every magazine and on every platform for a brief reputation and empty applause, Maccall stands alone, unspotted from the world and utterly disregarding it. Every man now who can put two sentences in sequence thirsts for fame in reviews and newspapers and must talk at this or that association and learned society. Witness Huxley and Tyndall for example as contrasted with Owen and Faraday, and see how fatally this restlessness injures them and deprives them of the power to become great. Like every other vice this particular vice is contagious, but whenever I feel for a moment discontented with obscurity, Maccall by his example reassures me.' William Maccall was born 25 February 1812, and died 19 November 1888. The *Dictionary of National Biography* says that his life was 'a long struggle with poverty'.

¹ His third son.

struggled at 1.45 a.m. out of a nightmare with no sleep since. However, the rider must 'call' on his horse, as they say in racing, and do his best not to lose disgracefully if he cannot win.

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

28.

Park Hill, Carshalton,
Surrey.
23 January 1889.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In another month we shall leave this place. We have had the greatest difficulty in finding a house, because we want a bedroom on the ground floor. At last we have taken a farmhouse at Ashted, about as far in time from the office as Carshalton but more in the country. In many respects it is very inconvenient, but it has the three rooms downstairs. It has also a large garden and a paddock. What we shall do with these white elephants I don't know. I wish your husband were near. I will send you our address when we leave.

. . . Dr. Johnson used to laugh at Boswell because he pretended that the weather depressed him. Johnson thought no rational man ought to allow clouds or fogs to influence him. Yet he himself was tortured by hypochondria, and his rebuke to his friend most likely, like many censures which we pass of the same kind, was a judgement

on his own weakness. I wonder what Johnson would have thought of this winter. Never in all my life have I seen such gloom. We have had literally no sunlight, but darkness aggravated by solid fog. Travelling has been an adventure, and the trains have gone anyhow or no how. Is it possible that the myth of the day of judgement is really true, only that it is a kind of centralized picture of what is going to happen really by degrees, and that smoke and not fire will be the end of us?

Ask your husband, if he wants to refresh his memory with the most vivid description of Dissenting life in country places which has been written for a long time, to turn to the collected fragments of Richard Jefferies just published, called *Field and Hedgerow*, and read 'The country Sunday'.

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

29.

Street Farm,
Ashted, Epsom.
3 March 1889.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Will you excuse a card, for we have no paper. It is worth a moment's special scribble to tell you that Jack ¹ is engaged to Agnes Hughes, daughter of Mr. Hughes the painter whom we have known so long. She is a most lovely creature and, by us,

¹ His second son.

very much beloved ; rather shy and reserved, but tenderhearted. They will not be married yet, for Jack's income, alas, is narrow.

I wish, oh how I wish your husband were here. There is this big garden which in a few days will require attention, and I know no more than an owl what to do with it. How much would his retaining fee be ?

. . . Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

30.

Street Farm,
Ashtead, Epsom.
1 July 1889.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I want you to get your husband to promise to bring you here for a day or two including Sunday—next Sunday if possible. There is no fear of cold-catching now. . . .

I have bought an astronomical telescope which you shall see—of course a very small one.

The news of my existence lately has been a play—*A Doll's House*—by Ibsen the Norwegian, which has been acted at the 'Novelty'. It was admirably put on the stage and I have never seen, except from Shakespeare, a play which has a nobler motive or is more dramatic. The godly have screamed at it as immoral, but never mind.

. . . Faithfully and affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

31.

Street Farm,
Ashtead, Epsom.
4 July 1889.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Next Friday week, the 12th, will suit us very well. As your husband was so successful in arranging the trains before, I will leave him to do it again. I hope we shall have clearer weather.

We have had only one opportunity of looking through the telescope, but we were able to see right into the craters of the moon and the dark shadows cast by the cliffs and mountains. In the unilluminated part there was one bright needle point showing the peak of a hill caught by the rays of the rising sun.

. . . Faithfully and affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

32.

Street Farm,
Ashtead, Epsom.
19 July 1889.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

By this post I send you a copy of Ibsen's *Nora, or Doll's House*, the play I saw.

I was very sorry you could not stay to see the second play, the *Pillars of Society*. I would not have missed it for a trifle, I can tell you. It greatly excited me, and as the house was crammed with people who proved to be excitable too, their

laughter and tears wrought upon me with almost too much power.

What an art the actor's is—evanescent enough, and yet I should be prouder to be such an actress as I saw last Wednesday than to be Prime Minister.

Best love to your husband and the children. Mind he reads the book and gives up that mayoralty in November. Not that he doesn't do a world of good, but when he is no longer mayor he will stay for Ibsen, to say nothing of

Your faithful servant,
W. HALE WHITE.

33.

Street Farm,
Ashted, Epsom.
15 December 1890.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Mrs. White and myself wish to thank you and yours for the very handsome present to Molly. It was so unexpected and so generous ; and what moved me more particularly was the thought of our long friendship—forty years now—so long and so intimate, that my child is treated now like one of your own.

I hope you have not suffered from the cold. Yesterday morning the thermometer marked 14 degrees at half-past five, and worse than the cold has been the fog ; all the more irritating because it has been so shallow, so that the villages on the tops of the hills here have had unclouded

sunshine. We have not, of course, been so badly off as the people in London. There, the darkness and filth have been dreadful.

. . . Willie's boy, my grandson, is greatly exercised over the logic of ' Jack Sprat could eat no fat ', &c. He cannot see the force of the last line, that they licked the platter clean ; the reason being that although it is affirmed that Jack could eat no fat it is *not* affirmed that he *could* eat the lean. Similarly with the wife. The child ought to be a lawyer.

This is nice stuff to put in a letter, but he is more interesting to me than Parnell or the Grand Old Man ; and his chatter is better than politics, such politics at any rate as fill the newspapers. I don't believe there was ever a time in our history when politics were such an utter sham, such utter hypocrisy, and so-much-by-all-thinking-creatures-to-be-contemned-and-neglected, as they are now. Some day there will be some politics which will be a little more serious and a little startling.

. . . Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

34.

Street Farm,
Ashted, Epsom.
20 March 1891.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am glad you have read *Rosmersholm*. Please remember that the author may not have

intended to make anybody a hero or heroine. As I said to you when I saw you, I think he meant to show what the effect of the new thought is, and may be expected to be, on people who are not strong enough to stand it. For my own part, I long for the time when men will turn away from these most barren discussions on God, immortality, and their own souls, and busy themselves a little more with science, or with the world of Shakespeare, Bacon, and Sir Walter Scott, or with their own gardens.

As for Rebecca West, she is very interesting to me, because she is so unsatisfactory, such a curiously composite creature, scheming the death of the wife for love of the husband, undoubtedly sympathizing with all his freedom schemes, refusing to marry him and bitten therefore with remorse, and finally determining to die with him.

Of such *most unsatisfactory* composition are we all mixed, and the creature with one motive, like a pin stuck through him longitudinally, does not exist.

I do beg of you to read *Lavengro*.

Read it in the large type three-volume edition, and recollect that I will lend it you in a moment, as I have offered to do, if times are bad, and you don't want to buy it. I *do* wish you to buy it, though, and to keep it as a companion. I particularly wish you to tell me what your husband thinks of it.

We have been in trouble here lately. Mrs. White has been very unwell again, and has been in bed for about a week. This is the third attack of utter prostration she has had this winter, and the worst. . . . Her patience and self-forgetfulness for others, even when she can hardly speak, are extraordinary. Added to this, Jeanie and her children and nurse came here just before the snow-storm and were laid up, or at least the children were, with bad colds which, in Leonard's case, looked like laryngitis, and instead of going home in two or three days, have remained here shut up ever since. In the midst of these calamities we had to change servants, and my dearest little Molly, being somewhat overdone, was on the brink of fainting away one evening. . . . However the snow is melting, the children are better, and the end of all things has not yet come.

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

35.

Street Farm,
Ashted, Epsom.
8 August 1891.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your note was very welcome, and your husband's visit and your own were most welcome. You diverted me for a time. I do not know if I shall be myself again, but at present the outlook is as unhappy as it has ever been.¹ In addition to

¹ His wife died 1 June 1891.

the actual loss, I suppose the shock and excitement affected me, for my nerves are all in disorder night and day. It is difficult for an outsider to comprehend how this should be. He sees of course nothing but the death of a woman to whom death was a release. I think of five and thirty years ago, and think too that *this* history has ended as all things end. Furthermore you can hardly imagine what it is to be at once deprived of an outlet for what you feel most intimately. Much as children are loved, it is impossible to impart to them all one hopes or fears. My poor wife daily heard from me what nobody now can hear, and offered a sympathy which nobody else can give. The world, aware of so small a portion of what was in her shy, unpretending soul, would have been astonished perhaps that she could be of such service to me, but she was for me and not for the world. The lesson of her heroic patience and perfect unselfishness was obvious to everybody, and that daily teaching has also departed. However, no more on this topic. I wish that this Saturday was last Saturday, so far as your presence is concerned. I have no friends either so old or so close to me as your husband and yourself.

Molly sends her best love and so do I to both of you.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

36.

Street Farm,
Ashtead, Epsom.

22 October 1891.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . It is now, I believe, pretty well settled that before Christmas I shall be out of the Admiralty. If my health gains I shall not be sorry, but I must say I look forward with a little foreboding to the change. Suddenly to alter all one's habits at sixty is no light matter. However, it must be faced. We shall leave Ashtead, but where we shall go I do not know. The best and cheapest house we have seen is in a village in Bedfordshire, but I doubt the wisdom of seclusion in such a very remote and quiet corner. We wish of course to be accessible to Willie and Jeanie, who are most devoted to us and never leave us for more than two Sundays—otherwise Ryde would be my choice, as I have always said. Willie says he would come to Ryde from Saturday to Monday as he comes to Ashtead now, but he could not do it, I am sure. I shall be glad to get out of Street Farm. The place seems haunted to me, and just when I think I have managed to forget, everything returns as vividly as if there were no space between. . . .

Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

37.

4, Sydenham Terrace,
Newcastle-on-Tyne.

14 November 1891.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Molly and I are staying here for a few days with some friends. The male friend is a partner in a large shipbuilding firm ; his wife, a singularly bright, cultivated woman. We, of course, also see Ernest. We were at Buxton for a fortnight, in order to experiment on its powers to put me in a little better order.

. . . I go back to work next week, and about Christmas shall be out of the Admiralty. We shall instantly, if all goes well, set about finding a house, but I hope, before commencing the search, to come to Ryde for a day or two. I hanker after your town. It is more to me than any other town now ; for although I have many friends in the place of my birth, they are not particularly close, and for some reasons I dislike Bedford. My father's shade meets me at every corner when I go there.

I have not seen Ruskin's poems. I hope . . . that the reprehensible modern practice of raking together everything a man has written, however unworthy of him it may be, has not been imitated. I do not fancy you will find in the Poems anything comparable to *Modern Painters*. I had a message from Ruskin a few days ago. He is placid and

happy, but never puts his hand to paper, not even to write a note.

. . . Most affectionately

W. HALE WHITE.

38.

Berachar, Kerley Road,
West Bournemouth.

31 January 1892.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was glad to have a note from Charlie telling me what was the state of affairs in Union Street. The influenza dangers I understand have disappeared. . . .

Fortunately we have escaped, so far, although I have suffered a good deal from other disorders, and that is the reason why we are here. We look on to the Island, and a beautiful object it is. We can see the red lights of the Needles and St. Catharine's, and my imagination goes beyond and almost sees Ryde. Bournemouth was selected because it is warm and dry. It certainly is warm, for here we are on the 31st January sitting with our window open, and it is like April or May. The place, however, has been so hideously ruined since I was here many years ago, that it would really appear as if some malignant spirit had been doing his best or his worst to counteract all the good that position and climate could accomplish by crowding on every inch of land the most villainous heaps of bricks and mortar that were ever called houses. None of

these shanties have gardens, and I suppose in a short time the whole coast from Christchurch to Poole will be a kind of Pimlico-by-the-sea. At any rate, it is all laid out for the builder.

We are as far off as ever from finding a habitation for ourselves. We can see nothing to suit us, and I dread more than I can tell the dullness and isolation of a suburb like Ashted or Carshalton in which there is not a single living stimulus or excitement. On the other hand, I cannot breathe in London.

If I were twenty years younger, or had three or four children about me and were strong and well, I should not mind living in a desert, but the case is different as it now stands.

. . . Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

39.

Street Farm,
Ashted, Epsom.
21 March 1892.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

On and after to-morrow fortnight, unless anything unforeseen intervenes, our address will be

9 High Wickham,
Hastings.

We decided upon this place after long and most wearisome search. It is not exactly what I should like, but it is the nearest to it, and we must put up with it. It is very, very small, but it is high up, overlooks the whole of the old town and also over-

looks the sea. It is on the East Cliff, very quiet and breezy, and is only ten minutes from the principal streets and shops. Hastings has many most pleasant associations for me, and although it is greatly overbuilt, it is sunny and cheerful. The drawback is the lack of space, compared with Street Farm, and the minuteness of the garden. However, we have a spare room, and I thought that it would be better to have a cottage just big enough for us, and spend our savings on seeing our friends, than to make more show and live up to the extreme end of our income. At present, having been used to a somewhat free hand in expenditure, I do not quite know what reduction I can effect.

. . . To-day has been my last day at the office ! I don't deny that I could have made too much of the epoch—very easily, and have allowed myself to feel more than it would do me any good to feel ; but I strive not to look that way. Thirty-eight years ago and a month over since I first sat down at a Government desk, and how much has happened since then ! The only remedy for such reflexions is to turn, as our old friend says, towards the Eternities ; continually to look upwards and forwards—never behind and below—and to evermore take interest in the newest authentic voices of the time.

With best love to yourself and Richard.

Ever yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

40.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.

27 April 1892.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You will perhaps care for a line just to say we are now nearly settled, and I am beginning to ask myself how I can accommodate myself to this tremendous change.

We live in a curious little colony, quite separate from the rest of the town although a part of it, and apparently much inclined to be sociable. One of our first visitors was a Mrs. Dannreuther, who also has a house in London. Her husband is a musician, gives concerts, writes music, was a friend of Wagner. She was Greek, a Miss Ionides, friend of William Morris, Burne-Jones, Rossetti, &c., and it was through that set that she heard of us and we became acquainted. Another caller was Miss Betham-Edwards, novelist, &c. A third was a wild kind of creature, a traveller and ornithologist. Then a Miss Blackwell, poetess, says she is coming with her sister Dr. Blackwell, both about 70. Do you remember a Dr. Blackwell, first of the women doctors who flourished in the profession about 30 years ago?

All this may turn out to be amusing, but as for friendship, that is another tune. People don't make friends after they are 60. However, so far what we purposed to do we have done. We have secured a very cheap, although very small house,

dry, decently built, bathed in sunshine and air beyond any house I ever saw. The weather we see and hear up on this hill is rather surprising. From my bedroom I can just discern Eastbourne, and you may imagine what the south-westerly wind means in such a situation. Oh, how I wish you and your dear husband were here. I think you ought to write up 'Hastings' in your bedroom as a constant reminder. It is not so far. From St. Catharine's I should think you could see Beachy Head, and Beachy Head seems close to us here in clear weather. You would find the place very amusing, and to sit on the parade gives you more variety even than that celebrated window in Union Street.

We have a very, very small garden, but I think plants will grow in it as it has so much sunshine and air. Will you ask Charlie to remember me if he has any roots or cuttings of flowers to spare? Just now is a bad time, of course, but perhaps he will not forget me a little later on. Anything will be most welcome, for as the space is so limited we must make as much of it as we can. At present it is absolutely empty.

At odd moments I have been reading *Les Misérables* again. What a wonderful book it is; how daring and yet how loyal! With all its audacity it stands on the firm rock.

... Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

41.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.

3 June 1892.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . I think about your moving more than perhaps you suppose. There is no house in this wide world save my own, which has been to me like Union Street. It has been a home, and I could always go in and out as I liked. I shall have a tablet put upon it :

‘ In this house lived for five and forty years two perfectly honest, happy persons, man and wife, who knew how to make other people honest and happy too. So says the friend, who, on this tablet, gratefully records the good days spent here.’

. . . Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

42.

Derwent View, Fitz Road,
Cockermouth.

August 1892.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I should like to have just a word from you to say how you and your belongings are, and whether you have moved.

Molly and I have been here for about ten days. We came to Cockermouth in order to be near Jack and his wife who live at Brigham, about a mile and a quarter to the east of us. They are both well, and she is lovelier than ever. Willie, his wife, and

children are at a farm-house hard by. We are not in amongst the mountains but close to them, and in many respects this is better. They lie in a magnificent extended heap to the south of us, and the sights we have seen, especially at sunset, are beyond all words. Criffle, just across the Solway, rises like a cloud about 20 miles northwards, and all the *Redgauntlet* country is between. No more mountain climbing, however! An end has come to that, as an end comes to all things, and I content myself now with gazing on the hills from their feet.

Do you know, I never go into a new land without wishing I had your husband with me. I always think of him and his interest in all that goes on on the earth, and I want him to tell me about the strange sheep and the strange cattle. The milk here, by the way, is abominable. It is cheap enough, 3*d.* a quart, but is water itself compared with the milk of the south. . . .

What I want more particularly to hear about yourselves is whether either of you will *feel* the removal. If you wish to beguile any cares, buy two little pocket volumes, 10*d.* each, by M. E. Wilkins, called *A Humble Romance* and *A Far-away Melody*. They are a collection of short New-England stories. Doubtless you have heard of them. Don't forget them, and tell me what you think of them. I think they are very good, although I do not mean to claim the first rank for them. I have been reading *Consuelo* again for the second

or third time, and this time in French. So much is left out in the English translation, and some of the best things are omitted. What a book it is !

Emerson somewhere talks about *Consuelo* as a new figure in literature, and so she is ; a new, living thing, a real extension of humanity. She is all on the right side too.

. . . Ever yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

I was asked to write something for the Shelley Centenary. It appears in the August number of the *Bookman*. It is called ' Our Debt to France ', and it may interest you. I haven't got a copy or I would send you one.

43.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.

7 November 1892.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Molly is away in London on a visit to her brother. Until she returns, I cannot say when I can leave. I have to go to Colchester, partly on business, at the end of the month. You may be sure, however, that I will come to Ryde as soon as possible. I will write again about it before long.

I have thought more about Tennyson's death than I should like to say or could say. Ruskin may now be considered as silent for ever, and the prophets and poets of my day have all departed.

However, it is best not to dwell on these things. I try as much as possible to find something to do. I have at least six months' work on a new preface for a second edition of my *Spinoza*, for it involves a re-reading of him through from end to end and a biography.

Have you seen Miss Jewsbury's letters to Mrs. Carlyle? They are very good. There is no straining, no pretence to philosophy, but they are very natural, very genuine, very entertaining and often very wise.

. . . Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

44.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.
4 May 1893.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was much shocked to hear of Vicat Cole's death. I wrote to Polly and had a note in reply, very affectionate, from her daughter Maud. I understand her father had been ailing for some time, although nobody expected such a sudden end. . . . I have not seen anything of the Coles for many years, and what they may be now I do not know, but in such cases the persons present before us are the persons of the past, and George, when he was a youth, was a lovable creature.

We are in a sort of tepid excitement here about the golf club, to which I belong. It seems tradespeople are not eligible, and I want to have some

fun out of the resolution, more fun than I shall get out of the game. It is a most comical distinction. Three clerks already are admitted, but one of the principal business-men in the town was told not to consider himself a candidate! The dentist is a member, but his brother, the druggist, is excluded. How very singular our proceedings must look when seen from the heights of heaven! I wonder if the good God ever laughs. If he does his laughter at times must be inextinguishable. The Homeric gods laughed, as we know, and in that respect were immeasurably superior to Jehovah. Their laughter, in fact, atones for much of their terrible laxity of morals.

Molly is going north soon. She has an invitation to spend some time with a Mrs. Wybergh in Cumberland, who lives in about the most romantic house I ever saw, a large old ancestral mansion facing the south on the slope of the hill-side looking over lawns and meadows to the blue mountains of Crummock. She took rather a fancy to Molly when we [were] last in that part of the world, and it will do the child good to have such an entire change of scenery and ways of living. I am asked to go too, but I would rather be at Ryde. However, I suppose I shall venture, especially as I shall be only three miles from Jack and Agnes.

I often think of your garden and have thought much more of it during the drought. Does your husband ever recollect the like? Is the Judgement

May 1893

63

Day going to enact itself gradually, that is to say, are we to be burnt up by degrees ?

. . . Ever yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

45.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.
23 October 1893.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I sent a message to you through Charlie some weeks ago, asking you to write. I am very glad to hear from you. I wish my friends would but realize how eager a *retired* man is to have news of those for whom he cares. . . .

We were a long time up in the North, first at Gateshead and then near Jack, thus escaping the heat and drought and, worse than all, the trippers at Hastings. . . .

As to myself, I have neither read, seen, nor done anything remarkable. I have been rather busy in conjunction with my friend Miss Stirling, now M.A., in getting ready for the press a new edition of my *Spinoza*, and I have written a new preface of about 100 pages. What I should have done without Miss Stirling I don't know. She is a *character*, a good public speaker for one thing, and a most accomplished scholar, although I don't think she is more than thirty.¹ We have had also

¹ Miss Hutchison Stirling's description of Mark Rutherford's personal appearance, by the way, ought to be preserved (I found it in an obituary notice in the *Inquirer* 29 March

another woman worth knowing staying here, Miss Maitland, Principal of Somerville Hall, Oxford. Her account of the young women of the new generation was interesting. The old order passes away, and although there is a tendency in me to protest against the girl of the modern University type, trained as men are trained and with men, I must be on my guard, I find, against mere prejudice and unreasoning Conservatism, and I cannot help admitting that there is something more attractive in her than in the uneducated creature of fifty years ago who frequently had not a single intellectual sympathy. A gentleman at this moment is staying here who is in the observatory at Greenwich. He tells me they have two young women there now, as astronomers, and they are admirable for their scientific knowledge, patience, and accuracy.

Oh me, it is a brilliant, sunny, morning after a Sunday of dismal cloud ! How I wish I were on Wootton Bridge with a high tide and the prospect

1913, quoting from her account in the *British Weekly* of the one occasion on which they met) :—‘ A ruddy, apparently robust, almost sailor-like man.’ She had to recover from ‘ the first surprise ’. Miss Stirling is to be congratulated for not allowing her surprise to blind her to what she really did see at the time. The same sailor-like look struck me again and again ;—an arctic explorer, as I often told him. Compare his own words about Bunyan’s portrait in the *Life* (p. 73) : ‘ The face is a poet’s, and it is also the face of a man who would be obeyed. It is the face of the author of the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, but it might be that of a great admiral or general.’

of walking home to dinner with you ! I never shall forget that morning I was there ! The view, although the place is not a show place, was singularly attractive to me. I want very much to come to Ryde. I was on the point of coming a few days ago to ask Richard's advice about a business matter, but it has settled itself. I want my annual *dose* of Ryde to set me straight, of you and your husband and the dear children and the country. Alas ! it must be postponed.

Love from us both to yourself and all.

Faithfully and affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

46.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.

24 June 1894.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It was very pleasant to see your handwriting again. I wish there were a chance of some more this dark miserable Sabbath morning. We have had the strangest weather here this month, little sun, wet, and driving grey cloud which has shut out the blessed celestial lights altogether. Sunday is a day on which I cannot endure gloom : in fact I never care much for Sundays and am glad when they depart. We do not observe them in any particular way, but the behaviour of the world outside is contagious.

As for stars, I don't know, but they may have gone out altogether. I have been waiting to catch

one particular star for three weeks, but in vain. One day, however, we had some pure sunshine, and as I had a spectroscope lent me, I managed to see for the first time in my life what are called the 'prominences', that is to say, the solar eruptions, enormous masses of ruddy hydrogen flame shooting some seventy or eighty thousand miles above the sun's edge. I shall never forget that spectacle.

I have heard once or twice from my cousin William lately. He has been in London and wanted me to stay with him at his friend's, Mr. Jones's, house. It was very kind of both of them to ask me, but I could not go. Mr. Jones's ways are so different to my own (bed about 2 a.m., breakfast at 10.30 a.m. or 11, and endless distraction) that I dared not venture.

Molly and I start on our travels about the middle of next month. We go northwards, of course, and perhaps may extend our journey to see my cousins and my friends in Edinburgh. On our way we may accept an invitation to—where *do* you think?—to One Ash, Rochdale, John Bright's old house! We have learnt to know his eldest son, J. A. Bright, the present member for Birmingham. I should very much like, as Molly will probably be in London a short time, to call at Ryde, were it only for a few hours. I suppose I should find you at home?

I have now nearly finished a re-reading of

June 1894

67

Carlyle's *Frederick*. Every time I take up Carlyle, a new Carlyle is revealed to me, and I may say a greater. There are some men who stand for that which is definite ; for a particular set of truths, or for a particular aspect of human life ; and, however interesting or important those truths or that aspect may be, we feel that their representatives are limited and we soon exhaust them. Carlyle, however, belongs to a different order and is infinite. The *Frederick* is to me the great modern epic, the Iliad of a man who was driven into the most desperate extremities ; so desperate that destruction seemed absolutely certain, but who did not yield and was finally victorious. That unquenchableness is what has drawn Carlyle to him ; and what more precious doctrine is there, even for us poor work-a-day creatures ? My enthusiasm for Carlyle grows as I grow older, taking into account the incapacity for enthusiasm which accompanies old age.

Oh, how I wish you and Richard would come here, and that I could show you Winchelsea and some of the wonderful old houses in Sussex ! I never saw a county so rich in lovely architecture. Why won't you ?

Love from Molly and myself to both of you and the children.

Ever faithfully and affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

47.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.
15 September 1894.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I had hoped to have answered ere this your last letter in person, but I have been much disinclined to move and have stuck here through the summer. I am afraid I have done wrong and that I ought to have conquered the temptation, for I am certain that monotony does no good to anybody, and that excitement and change, within limits, are necessary to health. You, of course, do not feel the necessity of variation of condition as I do, for you have children all around you and your husband and business, so that each day wears a different aspect. However, I do trust I shall be able to vanquish my inertia before long and to see you all once more.

I was at Brighton yesterday, just to catch a glimpse of my old friend Holyoake again. He is now 74, but as busy as ever, lecturing and making speeches, and his enjoyment of life is very keen. While with him I read a letter from Francis Newman, who is now close upon 90, and it is in the same clear, neat hand which I remember 40 years ago. He is still well, and has just published a new book.

I do wish you and your husband would come here. I should so love to show you Winchelsea and something really *old*. You ought every now and

then to see a genuine and lovely piece of antiquity, living as you do in a town which is new. You are almost within sight of us ! Won't you relent ?

. . . Your affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

48.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.

15 November 1894.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am very glad to hear you are better. I believe I know exactly when you caught that chill. I was upset, and half a dozen people amongst friends and acquaintances were down at the same moment.

What a time we have had of it the last few days ! Part of the sea-wall went : the houses along the front were barricaded, and the rain came down and continued to come in torrents.

I am rather proud of Minnie's ¹ success, because I always counselled that she should stick to her drawing. She seemed to me to have a real talent for it.

. . . It is better your husband should not be mayor, although I am glad he was suggested. Nobody would have suggested him here. Hastings is enough to make one despair of municipal government. It could hardly have been worse before the Municipal Corporations Act. It does, however, one service : it tries faith in principles. If a man can

¹ Their granddaughter.

believe, as I firmly do, in local self-government after a twelvemonth in a town like this, he has the pleasant conviction that he is not a reed shaken with the wind.

We have not stirred from home this year, save backwards and forwards to London for a day. I must go and see Jack soon, but I do dread the long railway journey more than you would believe. . . .

Faithfully and affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

I was sorry when Froude died, although the harm he has done is immense. That Carlyle *Life* can never be forgiven, at least by me.¹

49.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.
10 February 1895.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was very glad to see your handwriting. It showed that you were not beaten by the weather of the last fortnight. Such weather ! the foreshore frozen, fieldfares close to the house, a thing I never saw before, and all in February. Nevertheless, yesterday, with such a low thermometer, the air was so still and the sun so brilliant, that I sat out of doors as if it was summer. It was a realization of Davos.

¹ This and a similar judgement on p. 84 should be compared with the more restrained and, of course, carefully considered footnote in 'A Visit to Carlyle', *Pages from a Journal*.

I did not leave home last year. I have not slept out of my own bed since the autumn of 1893. I hope I shall be more courageous in 1895, and, of course, if I am, I shall go to Ryde. We think of moving in a few weeks to a house a little lower down, but still in High Wickham. We are so pinched for room here that we can hardly manage to take in a very lean friend, and Molly needs society now and then.

. . . As to myself, I have done nothing worth doing lately, and day after day passes rather too evenly. I miss London a good deal, and the one or two people there who were near to me, and if I could afford it and could stand the smoke, I would go back. I don't know if you saw in the *Times* a report of a paper by me read at the meeting of the British Astronomical Association on sun-spots.¹ It was not particularly interesting. The paper was only as long as this note, and it took me two years to write it. There was also a sort of biography in the *Athenaeum* of Chapman the publisher, which I contributed by request, as I knew him so well.

As to books, there is mercifully no need whatever to read anything new. We seem to be entering on another barren epoch in literature, and we must

¹ 'The Wilsonian Theory of Sunspots.' This paper was read at a Meeting of the Association 30 January 1895; it was printed in the *Journal* of the Association, Vol. 5, No. 4, 23 February, and the debate on the paper reported in the same number.

be thankful that we have lived through, or partly in, one of the most glorious periods in English poetry, philosophy, and art. Excepting in the reign of Elizabeth, there has been nothing like the era from 1775 to 1895. Ruskin now is the last, and after him the deluge. To understand to what we are coming, you ought to borrow from a circulating library one of the widely-read novels. I don't mean the confessed trash, but one praised by 'culture'. I particularly recommend to you a thing called *Keynotes*, which is cracked up to the skies. It was sent to me as an example. Do get it and tell me what your verdict is.

I wish your husband were here. This place would amuse him. We are half a century behind Ryde. Hastings is an old-fashioned, corrupt, jobbing, rotten, borough, and its municipal government is a joke. It is so odd. It knows no line of cleavage in thought, except between the most commonplace Dissent and equally commonplace Church-of-Englandism; and Dissenter and Churchman go at one another, hammer and tongs, in the weekly newspaper, column after column every week, upon all the old, dead differences, just as if all the world was included in All Saints or Bethesda and *must* belong to one or the other. I want to hear also what Richard would have to say about Local Veto, which is another burning coal here. I hope he doesn't believe in it. We have learnt something about the Gothenburg

system from Mr. Bright, whose family are staying here, and it interests me much. He thinks Birmingham would be prepared to try it if the House of Commons would permit. The teetotallers, however, stop the way. They are rabid and implacable.

When you write again tell me something about all the children, *each one of them*, and how Minnie succeeds with her drawing. My boy Ernest, by the way, the one at Gateshead, had an offer to go to the Zambesi a few days ago, but I don't think he will accept it.

With best love from us both, to yourself, your husband, and all in Ryde.

Yours faithfully and affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

50.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.

24 March 1895.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Will you please send me a line to say whether you have all escaped the influenza? I am anxious about my friends. Poor Jeanie, Willie's wife, has lost her father, mother, and brother—all in ten days!

You will see a notice of her father in the *Athenaeum* of yesterday. By a curious coincidence there is a paper of mine in it which may interest you.¹ I have not got a copy: otherwise I would

¹ 'The Growth of a Legend.'

send you one. I believe, however, you always have the *Athenaeum*. Molly has improved a little. I have been indoors for ten days and in bed for three days with the pest, a slight attack, but the weakness and depression left are singular.

. . . Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

51.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

31 May 1895.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

There is a chance that I may be in London towards the end of next week. How would it suit you if I were to return to Hastings by way of Ryde?

We are just emerging from the moving muddle. Note the change of number. Molly was away from home for a month in Lincolnshire, Suffolk, &c., and I shifted my quarters in her absence.

. . . Affectionately

W. HALE WHITE.

52.

C/o Mrs. Ellwood, Routenbeck,
Bassenthwaite Lake, Keswick.

2 September 1895.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . We, as you see, are once more in the land of mountains and falling waters. We are at a farmhouse, simple as it can be, but very sweet and very quiet, with a tumbling beck under our windows and the hills sheer up on our left hand. Such a place!

Oh, how I wish you were here! Can you not persuade yourself to come? If you are unable to walk, you could sit out of doors and see the lake and the Derwent. If you yourself refuse, try to entice your husband here. The summer trains are wonderfully quick and smooth, and I was less fatigued in travelling from Euston to Bassenthwaite than by the journey from Hastings to London. Do your best. I am very serious in my proposal. . . .

Don't let there be any rash, hasty put off—
'Oh no, of course not,' and so on.

Affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

53.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

3 October 1895.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

At last I am able to sit up and write with a pencil. Just before I left Bassenthwaite I felt very unwell, but as I had once before disappointed my friends at Rochdale, I determined to go there. I became worse and started for home the next morning. Never shall I forget that railway journey! It was intensely hot, and I very nearly fainted. When I reached Hastings the doctor came and said I had influenza with pneumonia of both lungs. My temperature was very high, but I was not delirious. Two nurses took charge of me, and owing, I suppose, to my non-inflammable composition the temperature soon fell. The cough was

perpetual and most exhausting, but I hope it is subsiding.

I write not in order to tell you all this dismal tale, but because I want to see a bit of your handwriting and to hear a bit of Ryde news as I lie here in bed, miserably dull.

... Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

54.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.
2 February 1896.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was beginning to gape for news of *you*. I wrote to you last. We are both tolerably well—in fact Molly is very well. I have recovered my walking powers, but have been tormented with some flying demon, now in my head, now in my hands, now in my stomach, and often diffused generally all over my body. It may be gout; it may be neuralgia; it may be the result of my illness, but anyhow it is the *very* devil, and I cannot help saying so, although it is wrong to use such naughty words to a lady. As for our history it is a mere chronicle of small beer, for neither of us has stirred from home since our disastrous northern journey. We have had one or two friends staying with us, and Jeanie and my truly wonderful eldest grandson, an inexhaustible companion to me, have been here. ... The only other event is the success of my ward and nephew, Robin Chisolm, at St. Paul's

School. He has obtained the first place in the open examination for an exhibition at Wadham College, Oxford, and goes up this year. Oh yes, there is just one other item. Willie has been appointed to deliver the Croonian Lecture before the College of Physicians, a great honour, I believe.

. . . It is very pleasant news that your dear husband is so well. One would like to know exactly what is the secret of his wonderful strength. Partly, I suppose, it is hereditary, and partly careful living. Certainly the stock is very remarkable, and I dare say, had he been so minded, and had been a farmer at the back of the island, he might have taken much greater liberties and yet have remained perfectly vigorous. The inherited part sometimes seems to me almost everything, especially when, as in my own case, all conceivable discipline ends in disappointment. I never cared much for drink, and always drank but little. During the last twelvemonth, however, I have almost abandoned it altogether, and I am bound to say I do not find the change makes much difference, probably because the quantity taken before was unimportant. It is original sin which is at the root of my woes.

Isn't this a merciful winter? On Friday last the thermometer at 10.30 a.m. on our sea-front marked 82°!! There was no mistake about it. The whole day was unclouded, and in London they had no sunshine whatever! Nevertheless we have

had very little sun lately on the whole. Meteorologists say that the weather has been of a most peculiar type, and nothing like it has been known for many years—high barometer and yet no frosts.

. . . Yours affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

55.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

26 October 1896.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I should like a line or two from you. . . . Alas that I should have to enquire by letter. I have not slept out of my own bed since last September twelvemonth. It is very wrong of me, and every time I yield, the fetters, of course, become more closely riveted. Molly has been away, but I stayed at home.

. . . We had some thoughts of going to live near Brigham a few weeks ago. A beautiful old house, high up above the Derwent, was offered me at a very low rent. It was entered by old wrought-iron gates, had a large garden and orchard, broad sweeping stairs, panelled rooms; and, curiously enough, was the very house which Molly and I had often admired and coveted. For a little while I was eager to go: it was within four miles of Jack: it was in the land I love, and the reasons why we came here have partly or mostly disappeared, for Willie finds it increasingly difficult to give us even a few hours from Saturday to

Sunday night; but at last prudence prevailed. The paradise is a mile and a half from Cockermouth town; the isolation would be strict unless we were to keep a chaise, which I cannot now afford, and the exile from London would be complete. So I gave it up, but do you know I am so silly that I never can, like a well-regulated person, give up finally what I know to be wrong. I hanker after things which my reason has condemned a thousand times, and sometimes curse it for being so dictatorial.

Morris's death made me sad. One by one everybody who has made the Victorian age pleasant and worth living in is going. Never since the Dark Ages—this is a literal fact—has there been a prospect so barren as that now before us. Hardly a man of letters or artist of the smallest consequence will be alive in a very few years. Morris was not one of my gods, but he was a most gifted creature. All the circumstances of his death were pathetic. The love of life was strong in him: he enjoyed it as few people did, and did not want to die.¹ What he began too cannot be continued,

¹ Philip Webb emphasizes the same characteristic. He writes to his friend in March 1888: 'I can always read Morris . . . partly because he enjoys doing his verse, as he does in doing a piece of dyeing, or handweaving—and all just like a child . . . Now, don't laugh, I am most surely of a melancholy temperament, and I have found for more than thirty years it has been good corrective to rub shoulders with Morris's hearty love-of-lifedness.'

for it entirely depended on his own personality. The Kelmscott press is to be closed as soon as the books in hand are printed, and his shop will become an ordinary Oxford St. 'establishment'.

Another 'depression' is roaming round the house to-night. Oh, me! about three weeks ago up here on this cliff! My bed literally shook, and I was afraid I should be sick with the vibration.

... Yours ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

56.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.
23 March 1897.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I wish you had been more communicative and had told me what had been the matter with you. Don't you think it was of the greatest consequence to me that I should know?

The news about —— is very good. Perhaps even now by 'God's grace', as you and I used to say fifty years ago, she may enjoy, if not happiness or at any rate the happiness which is her due, a fair share of peace, and freedom from acute anguish, such as at one time threatened to overwhelm her.

There is so much unaccountable, undeserved misery in the world, that I find the only thing to be done is not to think about it. I do not mean that we ought to refrain from thinking about the sufferer, but that philosophizing and attempts at

reconciliation are useless. We must simply be silent, and not only be silent, but refuse to reflect upon the subject, and we must busy ourselves rather with what is productive of quiet content and joy. Every moment wasted on insoluble problems is so much taken from time which might be spent in the absorption of sunlight. — is the text of this bit of preachment.

I am glad to hear you are looking into Ruskin again. I never open him without feeling the flame in him which kindled so much in years gone by. How much there is in him which passed for extravagance, but which is literally true! People imagine that an extreme statement must necessarily be exaggerated or false. Very often it is the extreme which represents most closely the actual fact.

. . . Whether my gouty or neuralgic arm will ever come right again I don't know. At present writing is as difficult as it was, or almost, at any rate, when I was doing pothooks. The howling torment has gone, but a thousand disagreeable sensations, nipping, crawling, freezing, burning, &c., &c., have taken possession of the diseased limb and wander up and down in it.

Molly sends her best love to you both and so do I.

Richard is a wonder! I do wish that the secret antenatal history of this 79-years-old-youth could be discovered, if it could be of any service

in producing his like for posterity. What lucky threads must have been woven for him ! I often regret I never saw his father, though I suppose his mother, whom I *did* know, ought to have the credit for the largest share in him.

Your ever affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

57.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

7 June 1897.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . Of course I can understand that if you leave home you must go to Whitby, but I do wish there were some chance of seeing you here. As to myself, I have not been away from home since last September twelvemonth, and the consequence is that the fetters of habit, always strong with me, are riveted more firmly than ever. I must break them this year at any cost. I did go to London a few days ago to see some of my old friends at the Guildhall, Millais, Fred. Walker, Rossetti, &c., and found my emotion as fresh as ever, perhaps greater than it ever was, because it was so much assisted by remembrance and association.

My son Jack has been for some time and still is in the wild part of Spain. He writes long, amusing letters, with stories almost incredible of the Spanish priest and what is called religion amongst the people ; such fanatic superstition—and yet it sits so easily on them ! What would you

think of this in Ryde? An Englishman is cheated by the officials of a small town over a contract. He complains to the priest, one of the good sort, a dignitary with an income of £10 a year. The priest rings his church bell, summons the *mayor* and all the town to the church, gets up in his pulpit, lectures them all, calls them 'beasts' including the mayor, and dismisses his congregation with a direction for immediate restitution of plunder and justice henceforth. His orders were at once obeyed. The majority of the priests, Jack says, are not of this delightful type but are fat, coarse, sensual. It is wonderful that, within three or four days of London, men and women should be found so utterly unlike you or me.

Molly is very well, has taken to golfing and much enjoys it.

. . . Love from us both to yourself and your husband. I hope you keep your temper over foreign affairs, and that you were calm when you read the Emperor of Russia's letter to the Sultan.

. . . Your most affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

58.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

22 June 1897.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . I will be with you in spirit on your golden wedding-day. I shall think of you continually. 'Oh Sons and Daughters of Time,' as our

old friend Thomas Carlyle says. What a wonderful thing this existence of ours is!

By the way, I have been quite absorbed in reading Norton's early letters from and to Carlyle. They show how shamefully mendacious Froude is.¹ I think Carlyle's letters to his mother and his mother's to him are as touching as anything in the language. Some passages almost upset me. I fancy Richard would greatly sympathize with their deep religion, expressed under those ancient forms. The picture of the hard, peasant, life too, he would love.

... Your most affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

59.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

27 October 1897.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have sent you and your husband the book.² It is of no use to you and of no particular interest to anybody save to editors and suchlike folk—for whom it was intended.

But it will serve as a token of affection. Tie it up when you have looked at the outside and put it on the top shelf. What a delight it was to see you again! Naturally it was so, considering the

¹ See note, p. 70.

² This must be his *Description of the Wordsworth and Coleridge Manuscripts*, &c., published by Longmans Green & Co., 1897.

history of the last (very nearly) half a century's friendship. Love to both of you.

Ever yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

60.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

26 December 1897.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

. . . I have heard from Willie at Assouan. The travelling—twenty-two days—was very tedious, and it is too soon at present to expect any news about his health. It is so strange that any child of mine, of me born in such a town as Bedford, with no background that is not thoroughly English to any part of my existence, should be living on the edge of the Desert and drinking the water of the sacred River. The mayoralty of Assouan must be a less expensive office than that of Ryde. When the mayor of Assouan 'entertains', his guests crawl through a hole into his mud hut: he then takes a fowl, pulls it to pieces with his fingers and distributes it.

Richard seems to have been acting on Rogers's maxim—whenever a new book is published, read an old one. I also read hardly anything but old books. I have devoted lately my mornings before breakfast to that very ancient volume the Bible and am nearly at the end of Isaiah, edified and excited as I am sure I should not have been by anything advertised, piping hot, for many a year.

What a cowardly compromise, by the way, the Revised Version is! When you use it, always, or at any rate almost always, stick to the margin. The Bible to me is so precious because, although it is supposed to have passed into our very blood, its thoughts, its life, like its scenery, are really completely outside us who live in this nineteenth century in England. I do not encounter in it a re-hash of modern, Western thought, but something quite strange, foreign, Eastern, and yet so true. Compared with anything in our own literature, it is like a palace at Damascus contrasted with a British 'gentleman's residence'; may be a mansion, but nevertheless not Oriental. The moment I open the Bible, I feel I am in a new world: I have died and am born again. We are *not* familiar with the Bible. What we are familiar with is a set of notions of our own creation which we suppose we have extracted from the Bible, but few indeed are those who breathe the air of Palestine.

My dear grandson, my eldest son in a way, is with me for his holidays. He walks better now.¹ He is an incessant delight to me. I never saw a child so determined to get to the very bottom of anything he does not comprehend, or one whom it was so completely impossible to put off with incomplete explanations.

Best love to both.

Affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

¹ After a serious accident.

61.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

August 1898.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

... We are not going North this year. I had thought of a visit to Cumberland to see Jack, but it came to nothing. I should like a few weeks in London in October if possible, in order that I may have a little time with Willie and two or three friends, and perhaps I shall make up my mind to adventure, but it is all uncertain. I do so hate travelling and strange houses. When I was last in town I had an interesting day with Mrs. Lewes, widow of George Eliot's stepson. I sat at the desk where the novels were written, read her letters, and, what was still better worth reading, her little memorandum books in which she jotted down the things that came into her head. What a picture they gave of her strenuousness, of her keen, constant endeavour! I was driven when I came back to begin upon her again, and am glad to find that my love for her after so long an absence from her is unchanged. Mrs. Lewes also showed me some letters of Charlotte Brontë to her father-in-law. This was the first time I had ever handled anything she had touched, and the paper seemed to shoot something electrical through my fingers to my brain.

... Farewell for the present. Be sure you say how Mary is, and, when you see her, give her my best

love and tell her that I am always thinking about her, not as any fixed Mary, but as Mary in long clothes, then in short clothes, then as a beautiful girl of one-and-twenty, and then as a mother. It is like unwinding a succession of lovely pictures.

... Yours ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

62.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

23 December 1898.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

... What days we have had this week! Just before I began this note to you I was looking out of window—6.30 a.m. and the sight was wonderful, the 'starry Gemini' slowly sinking in the West, and in the East the first lovely flush of dawn. Mars, too, is splendid in the West. My telescope, alas, is sold. Our garden, as I told you, is partly a quarry, and although it may become a garden again, the ground on which the observatory stood was excavated.

I send you a paper¹ which may interest you. Unfortunately I never saw a proof, so that you must make allowances. I had to be very wary, for the *British Weekly* is orthodox, and I should not have consented to write in it if the editor, who is very friendly, had not urged me. I remember reading that book of Sewell's a great many years ago, and William either talked or preached about it.

¹ 'A Forgotten Book,' *British Weekly*, 8 December. See p. 137.

. . . Molly and I both send our best love. We are well, save that we have caught colds. If one of us catches cold, the other is sure to catch it too.

Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

63.

5 High Wickham, Hastings. .

4 March 1899.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . Molly and I were on the northern border of your county for a few days last month, too far from Ryde to permit a day-visit. It is still a wonderful land, although the rich people have found it out, and you can hardly go a mile without being confounded by some aggressive 'mansion', built apparently to proclaim the depth of the owner's pocket. What a grievous pity it is that the builders of these palaces will not take to heart Wordsworth's counsel never to let the house dominate the landscape. These houses, one in particular belonging to a Mr. —, positively insult the fields and woods round them. I went away mainly because Molly was not very well. She is better, but in a great muddle. We have had our two servants for years. One is going to be married, and the other having been jilted—so we suspect—will not stay in Hastings. Her loss is irreparable. She is one of the most trustworthy creatures we have ever had about us, and perfect in her work. All attempts to find a substitute, no

matter what wages we offer, have failed. If now you will put a ticket round the neck of some capable Isle of Wight woman and send her here you shall be rewarded. I fully expect I shall have to take to scrubbing floors and emptying slops. Farewell. . . .

Affectionately yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

64.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.
7 May 1899.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I never dreamed you would copy the poem for me, but I am glad, as you may suppose, to have it in your handwriting. It is a noble piece of work. It is so refreshing to come into contact with such whole-hearted admiration. I cannot endure the critical measuring attitude towards great men. I see in *Literature* that Tennyson and Wordsworth are to be picked over and that a little thin volume in each case is to be excerpted containing all that is supposed to deserve preservation.

I need hardly tell you I did not ask myself to Swinburne's. I was invited. I have not read as much of his poetry as perhaps I ought to have read, but his prose I know well. Next to Coleridge and Lamb I place Swinburne, most unhesitatingly, for delicacy and sureness of discrimination. He lives at Putney with Mr. Watts-Dunton in a smallish house which contains, however, some remarkable

drawings by Rossetti. He is lightly built and has a curiously nervous manner, twitching his feet and twining one foot round the other when he sits down. He now wears a long beard which conceals the chin, the weak part of his face. The eyes are the strong feature, grey and full of light. Unhappily he is so deaf that it is difficult to keep up a conversation with him. He read to us some comical descriptions of animals in an old book he had picked up, enjoying them as if he were a big schoolboy. There is a magnificent collection of Shakespearean quartos on his shelves which are evidently considered a treasure.

Molly and I propose to go to Alfoxden this week for a few days. It is in the Quantocks, and the birth-place, as you will remember, of many of the *Lyrical Ballads*. I have intended for years to pay it a visit, and perhaps the pilgrimage thither just now will relieve some of my ailments, although mainly it is a real pilgrimage for pious purposes.

Love to both of you.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

65.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.
16 July 1899.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was just about to write to you when your note came, for I wanted to know how you and your husband were. I am very glad to hear that you

are both well. I am also glad to learn that the great-grandchild and the mother are prospering. As to myself, I lead the idlest of lives. There is a woman here who lets out a shabby old chaise and an equally shabby old pony who goes at the rate of five miles an hour, the charge being about 7s. 6d. a day. In this vehicle, which would be a scandal in Union Street, Molly and I have been visiting some of the exquisite Sussex villages which lie remote from excursionists in this corner of England. Last week we drove over to Northiam, twelve miles distant, all up and down hill and through hopfields and most umbrageous lanes. Under the old oak on Northiam Green Queen Elizabeth is reported to have sat before dinner and to have taken off her shoe, for what purpose history does not inform us. The drawback to these jaunts lately has been the drought. It is pitiable to see how parched the earth is, and the failure of the water this year will be most serious. If all the springs and wells do not run dry we are going to a place called Windmill Hill next Friday for a few weeks, in order to escape the worst of the tripper season. Windmill Hill is about 14 miles from Hastings, between Herstmonceux and Ashburnham. I have amused myself lately with writing a short preface and some notes to a curious little volume which my friend Mr. Dykes Campbell left behind him unpublished. It is a facsimile of some Coleridge MSS. of no interest whatever to

the ordinary reader, but Mrs. Campbell wished it to be issued and I undertook the necessary explanations.¹ I do not suppose a dozen copies will be sold. If it had possessed any value other than that which it possesses for a biographer or editor I would have sent you one. As it is, I am sure you would not think it worth the postage.

. . . I have been reading the Bible through again—an hour daily before breakfast. I read it through once in every two or three years, and always find it profitable beyond almost any other book. I have also been reading Wesley's *Journal*, a most extraordinary compound of superstitious folly, wisdom, extravagance, and shrewdest common-sense. What a man he was ; what a ruler of men ! Whole pages of it are almost unintelligible Methodist rant, but it is redeemed continually by such passages as these—

‘ The Devil once infused into my mind a temptation that perhaps I did not believe what I was preaching. “ Well then,” said I, “ I will preach till I do.” ’

Again—

‘ I *feel* and *grieve* ; but, by the grace of God, I *fret* at nothing.’

Wesley was, so I have always thought, a really great man. He had true religious insight, he

¹ Coleridge, *Facsimile Reproductions of the Proofs and MSS. of some of the Poems*. Edited by J. Dykes Campbell, with Preface and Notes by W. Hale White. Constable, 1899.

was self-denying as any apostle or mediaeval saint, giving all his goods to feed the poor, and he had a genius, almost Napoleonic, for command; but he was born in a bad time when the proper development of such gifts as his was impossible. Caught up into the strange eighteenth-century element of ecclesiastical lying, and, struggling against it, he emerged imperfect as we behold him. Farewell for the present. Molly and I send our best love to both of you.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

66.

C/o Mrs. Everest, Windmill Hill,
Hailsham, Sussex.
16 August 1899.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We have been here for nearly a month, and go back the day after to-morrow. We migrated in order to escape the worst of the Hastings excursionists. Never has the town been so vile as it has been this summer, so drunken and so indecent. Our retreat has not, however, been very successful, for the drought, heat and north-east wind have made the country look pitiable. It seems almost impossible that the fields can recover, and to-day there is as little chance of rain as there was six weeks ago. The water also in the villages is failing.

I write because I want to know how you both

are, and how this extraordinary weather has affected you. Tell me also how the children are. Is Kate going to leave Whitby? How I should like to see her! If I ever go northward again, a very doubtful 'if', I would go round by Whitby on purpose to spend an hour or two with her. My youngest boy, Ernest, is no longer at Gateshead. He has taken another post at Rugby.

... Since I have been here I have been reading *Clarissa Harlowe*, seven volumes! I forget whether I ever read it before. I wonder if in your youthful days you permitted yourself to look at that book. I cannot say that I find it wearisome. This is the complaint most people make, but to me the genius of Richardson is sufficient to carry me on without any sense of fatigue. But this incessant circling and hovering round one idea or rather round one *image* makes the story more immoral by far than anything Fielding ever wrote, although there are not perhaps half a dozen gross phrases in Richardson's three thousand pages. His rate of progress, that slow walking pace, which allows us to see everything by the way, never hurrying past anything of interest, turning back often to look at it again, is delightful. Bad, no doubt, *Clarissa* is on the whole, but as I grow older I thankfully accept anything great and good I can find, no matter with what evil it may be mixed. God has determined that His Spirit shall be

incorporated always in a body which at many points is rather disgusting.

Best love to yourself and your dear husband.
Write soon.

Affectionately yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

67.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

26 August 1899.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You will be surprised to see my handwriting again so soon. During the last three or four months I have not been well, suffering from an aggravation of what has been the trouble of my life, a kind of dyspepsia which produces irregular motions of the heart and gives me bad nights. As I have not consulted a doctor about it for some years and am losing weight, I went to see Dr. Goodhart yesterday. He thought I ought to get out of Hastings and live in a more bracing climate. He mentioned Yorkshire. It is odd he should have said this, because it was hovering about in my mind when I last wrote to you that perhaps Yorkshire, which has done me good before, might be the place for me, and that as there is only one person in Yorkshire whom Molly and I know, and we want to be in sight of the sea, we might as well try to find a house at Whitby. That was why I asked you if Kate was going to remain there; but, as I have just said, I never

dreamed that Dr. Goodhart would recommend that part of the world. When he had given his advice I asked him if he knew Whitby, and he told me that he knew it very well and that it would be very suitable. Now, I want to hear your opinion and your husband's, because you will think of many things which would not occur to a doctor. I dread moving, I do believe, more than the *last* move, and at my age this must be excused, but at the same time if by moving I can save my health for the next few years (supposing I am to live for a few years), I will make the sacrifice. The reasons in favour of Whitby, according to Dr. Goodhart, were the moors at the back and the sea in front. When I was there I must confess I was much taken with the town and should prefer it to Scarborough. However, I shall hear what your testimony is. You may as well say nothing to Kate, at any rate at present. There is no hurry.

. . . Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

I should not in any case come to a final determination until I had tried the experiment of a month's visit. I should not perhaps tell Kate till we were actually installed in our lodgings. She might possibly be kind enough to ask us to stay with her and I should not like to refuse, but my restlessness and peculiar ways make it impossible for me to stay with friends.

68.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

10 October 1899.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Jack left for Spain last week. His wife and child will follow later on. . . . A railway about 60 miles long is to be made. Jack is manager of the concern . . . He is sorry to leave England, but it would have been foolish to refuse a good offer. Burgos, I believe, is his head-quarters.

. . . I hope you are sound on the Transvaal question and that you protest against war. . . . I do not deny that the English-speaking people in South Africa have their grievances, but substitute Germany for the Boers and do you think Chamberlain would have interfered? Besides, consider the history of our relationship with them, the annexation and the raid. I have but scant sympathy with the gold-mining speculative gentlemen in the Transvaal, nor do I much care for the propagation of their race and dominion. The whole of the Chamberlain policy, the grasping at territory and the consequent increase of our army and navy, seems to me a prediction of disaster some day. Endless complications will be the result and ceaseless wars, some little and perhaps some big ones. The situation to-day is strikingly similar to that of Rome under the empire, and we know how she fared.

. . . Your ever affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

. . . Jack's wife and my dear granddaughter are staying with us. The child is a perfect specimen, no prentice-work. God has done His best.

69.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

28 January 1900.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The news of Ruskin's death came to me late at night by telegram and was a great shock. He was the last of the men who made this century glorious, the last of those lights which in letters and art illuminated and directed us in youth and middle age. I had for a long time expected his death, but you know that, although a candle may give but the feeblest glimmer whilst it is expiring, we do not say 'It is dark' till it has gone out. The notices of Ruskin which I have seen are all poor and miss the mark. They admit his excellence in 'style', and that he did service as an art-critic in his day, but we are told that even in art he exaggerated and is not trustworthy, and as for his ethics and political economy they were folly. The real truth is that his ethics and political economy are the real substance and are eternal. . . . I have settled not to take the doctor's advice about Whitby. I am so afraid of the cold. Molly and I spent three weeks at Lyme Regis just before Christmas, the most lovely, unspoiled, seaside little town I ever beheld. When we were there we saw

a house at Charmouth which took our fancy, and we are now waiting a report on the drains before we decide. In its favour are the beauty of its surroundings, and its quietude: its drawbacks are the big, walled-in, old garden which I shall not know how to manage, and the distance from London. But as to the latter point, I must make the best of it. I am compelled to leave Hastings; I want to be near the sea and it is impossible almost to find a house within my compass in any seaside town easily accessible from London. Besides, the trippers make life unbearable in places like Hastings and Eastbourne. Oh! if I could but have your husband near me to instruct me what to do with that garden and the conservatory with its grape-vines!

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

70.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.
8 March 1900.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The negotiations for the house at Charmouth had a curious ending. It was old, and I insisted on an examination of the floors. The surveyor found that there was no ventilation under them and that the oak joists were bedded *in* the earth. Some part of the flooring, of course, was rotten. I declined to take the house unless the owner would amend this defect, whereupon he wrote to

March 1900

101

me that he would do nothing of the kind ; that it was evident I was a sinner and afraid to die ; that he could show me how my fear of death could be removed, and he enclosed a parcel of tracts ! It is an odd use, is it not, of the ' scheme of salvation ' to make it supersede sanitation ? I did not either quite see why, even if I had no fear of death, I should be tormented with rheumatism.

We have now taken a house at Crowborough and move in May. It is small, but has an unmade garden of an acre and a half. It is not what we wanted—the garden or rather the field is too big, and I don't know what to do with it. Crowborough, however, on account of its altitude is so much in request that we could find nothing else within our means. You know, I suppose, where it is—about six or seven miles west of Tunbridge Wells.

The war disturbs me worse than ever. I can think of little else. Worse than the war is what it has disclosed. . . . Our forefathers groaned under the tyranny of kings and nobles, but it was a tyranny over bodies. The modern millionaire sets a newspaper going, and acquires absolute tyranny over souls as well as bodies. We have started a Conciliation Committee here, and have had Schreiner to lecture. The mob would have been unruly if they had dared, but the police were faithful. We are now going to distribute *Morning Leader* leaflets all over the town.

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

71.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

28 March 1900.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

How your handwriting did rejoice me this morning. Every other minute for days and days have I been thinking of you, and your dear husband. A life prolonged to him is worth more by the hour than it would be to ordinary creatures by the century.

Let one of the children keep me punctually informed what progress is made.

Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

72.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

13 April 1900.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

To-day we have only one post, and that is not from the country, so that of course I have not heard from you. I have no particular message for you, excepting the message which the mere handwriting of anybody I love always conveys to me, a message which will, I hope, be conveyed to you. I cannot tell you what a strange effect Richard's illness has had on me. Sorrow, sadness, melancholy forecastings of my own future, retrospects, dreams of 50 years gone and of a hundred scenes of joyous intercourse, Union Street, Shanklin Down, Ashey, Nunwell, the Lake Country—all

these are mingled together, but perhaps superior to all is the thought of him lying calmly on his bed, unvexed by a single fear ! What a spectacle, what a rebuke !

I cannot resist a conviction that he will recover. The ascending sun is in his favour. Willie, who was here last Sunday, said that if the pneumonia had disappeared, the chances now were that he would conquer the weakness. When you write again, tell me if the pneumonia was brought on by influenza.¹

Best love from,
Your ever affectionate friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

73.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

22 May 1900.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I cannot help sending you the briefest note. It must be of the briefest, for words of mine at such a time would be hateful impertinence, and yet I must send it. It is just to have the satisfaction of speaking that I write. I did not know till between nine and ten on the morning of the funeral at Brading on what day it was to be ; so that it was impossible for me to be present. Had I known I should have come, but perhaps it is as well I did not. I have thought of you every

¹ See letter to Philip Webb, 14 June 1900.

hour. Please remember now and then in the midst of your trouble that to me it is continually present. I cannot mitigate it, I cannot mitigate my own, it has loosened my hold on life, but it may be something to you to feel that yours in a measure is mine. Please on no account make any attempt to reply. Some day I shall come to Ryde. Give my love to Kate, and ask her kindly to send me word how you are.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

74.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

5 July 1900.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have kept the latest photograph and am thankful for it. I have what, I think, is a better likeness than the other two and taken at about the same time.

I believe I told you that Hastings did not suit us, and that the doctor advised greater altitude. We are now about 650 feet above the sea-level and on sand. The house is new and small, but the ground, not yet made into a garden, is about an acre and a half, much more than I can properly manage. No other place was procurable here. Whether we shall like our abode I cannot say. I am afraid the cold will be severe in the winter, and indeed we have already been tried with this

damp, unseasonable weather. We have a man and his wife instead of two maid-servants, an arrangement which suits us better and is cheaper. We have few acquaintances round about. One is a gentleman named Constable, rector of an adjoining parish and grandson of Scott's friend. His mother an old and very handsome lady—over 80—is most interesting. Not a faculty is impaired: she works in the garden and is full of reminiscences of Chalmers, Erskine of Linlathen (to whom Carlyle was so much attached), and other eminent Scotch folk of sixty years ago.

Another caller is a Dr. Roberts who has a large observatory devoted to photographing the stars. He told me a fact worth communicating. There are empty spaces in the sky which yield no objects. Prolonged exposure of the photographic plate which reveals the minutest stars and faintest films of nebulae elsewhere shows nothing but blank darkness in these gaps. The supposition is that we here look through the galactic system of which all the visible Universe forms a part: that we see infinite space, in which perhaps other systems may lie. So much for myself.

Courage! Courage! You have more than your share, and it is worth while to live in order that you may keep alive faint hearts like my own. A thought of you often does me more good than any book. Naturally it is impossible not to feel that the ties which bind us to life are loosened. Every day

with me they grow slacker, and the deaths of those we love break many. Tennyson, Carlyle, Emerson, Ruskin and your dear Richard have gone, and why should we stay? What harm can come of going where they are? I do dread pining sickness, loss of faculties, and being a wearisome burden to those about me, but perhaps these trials may not await me. Anyhow, patience and faith. Every year sees one more wave surmounted.

. . . Your most affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

75.¹

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

18 September 1900.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I hope to come to Ryde for a day early next month. I *must* come and see you all again. I will tell you some time beforehand when it will be. I should not be able to stay for more than a day—perhaps Sunday—for I am not well away from home. I was grieved to hear that you had been ill, and I rejoiced to hear that you are better again. I trust that for the sake of your children and friends you will not resign your post just yet. I know how hard it is, when the pleasure has departed from life, to live for others. It is sometimes difficult to see what good we do them. In

¹ This letter is not in his own handwriting. It is marked 'Copy'.

your case there can be no debate on this point. I hardly remember anybody whose influence in her own circle has been more profound than yours.

I wonder how many times I shall talk to people, people who never knew you, about you and Richard. This week I was telling your story, not the story of events, but of your real life, to somebody of whom you have never heard, and it will do good. I told it to show how independent men and women of strength and virtue might be of all the Sects; that there is not a single excellence or a single noble influence which will not grow of itself without the interference of the priest, if only it obtains its proper chance. I said, and with truth, that your children had been more effectually prompted to good and restrained from evil by their parents alone than if the Archbishops and Convocation had taken them in hand, and that these parents relied upon no theological arguments (for they did not believe in them), but trusted to that 'natural religion' in which only is salvation. This is all gospel fact and you must not forget it.

I am glad you read again the old books, Carlyle and Tennyson. Carlyle remains to me—this is my now irreversible verdict on him—the voice which in our century came from the deepest depths. In nobody do I find the immovable rock as I find it in him. Good-bye for the present, my dearest friend.

Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

76.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

2 October 1900.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Will it suit you if I come to Ryde next Saturday? Molly very much wishes to come with me. We should reach Ryde probably in the forenoon, although I cannot say certainly as the trains may be altered this month. Molly might stay at your house, if you can find room for her. I should go on, perhaps to Sandown, in the evening and spend Sunday with you. We must return on Monday. Will you ask Charlie if there is a good hotel in Sandown, quiet and facing the sea? I will let you have a card; supposing you can take us in on Saturday, telling you at what time we should arrive. Best love from both of us.

Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

77.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

17 December 1900.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

... It is welcome news to hear that you are better. Length of life I myself care little about, but I do pray to be free from decrepitude and pain.

Molly thinks it is very good of you to remember her birthday, and I am to give you her best love.

Lord's Well Lane,
Crowborough, Tunbridge Wells.
2 Oct. 1900.

my dear friend,

Will it suit you if I come to Ryde
next Saturday? Molly very much wishes
to come with me. We should reach Ryde
probably in the forenoon, although I cannot
say certainly as the train may be altered
this month. Molly might stay at your
house, if you can find room for her. I
~~should~~ ~~probably~~ go on, perhaps to Sandown,
in the evening and spend Sunday with
you. We must return on Monday.
Will you ask Charlie if there is a good
hotel in Sandown, quite near facing
the sea? I will let you have a card;
supposing you can take us in on
Saturday, telling you at what time we
should arrive. Best love from both of us.

Yours affectionately

W. Hale White

She cannot remember the Leopardi. I never read him. Just now I am engaged with the new edition of Lord Byron's letters, many of which have not before been published, and am more than ever amazed at him. Such a mass of white hot coal! Everything flimsy and artificial goes to ashes at its touch. His sincerity is the quality that now strikes me. Full of *scoriae* is the coal, but what a glow! how much it burns up!

Of new books I see few or none. If I wish for recreation I turn to Dickens or Scott, and I have just renewed my acquaintance with my goddess, little Nell of the *Old Curiosity Shop*. But there is one book I have read during the last few weeks, not exactly new but by a living author, which is perfectly genuine, perfectly delightful. It is called *In a Gloucestershire Garden*, and the author is the Rev. H. N. Ellacombe, vicar of Bitton. He is an oldish man, a scholar, and he is a complete master of garden-craft. He knows all about flowers, and everything he says about them is first-hand. It is a sweet, peaceful, vital transcript of country life, something like White's *Selborne*, nothing traditional, nothing merely literary in it, and it is as refreshing as the quiet Bitton garden itself must be. Mr. Ellacombe has also written another modest book, *Plant-lore of Shakespeare*, telling us everything that can be told of every plant Shakespeare mentions. How your dear husband would have enjoyed *In a Gloucestershire Garden*!

. . . Jack is prospering at Burgos. He has great responsibility and is much away from home. His wife is brave and uncomplaining, but she is quite solitary in that Spanish town, with no society save that of Spanish women, devout Roman Catholics, or perhaps not devout but orthodox, who never open a book and have no interest in anything which makes up the life of an educated woman here.

. . . Your ever affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

I shall be in my seventieth year in another four or five days !

78.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

13 April 1901.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Can you send me a line to say how you are ? I am anxious to know if the cold has affected you. We have had bitter northerly winds here (although a few days this week have been warmer), and I have made a vow that if I am alive and movable next winter it shall be spent in Devonshire or Cornwall.

The last link with Colchester, my mother's birthplace, has been broken by the death of —, and that town, which fifty years ago was crowded with relations and friends, now does not contain a soul whom I know. —'s servant had been

April 1901

III

with her forty years ! I am glad to say that her mistress's small leavings are devoted by will to an annuity for her.

My old friend Holyoake came over to see me this week. He is 84 to-day, and, excepting cataract in one eye and a slight failure in hearing, is almost unimpaired. His mind is as active as ever, and he thinks nothing of going down to Manchester to lecture or speak on his one subject, co-operation. He can eat and drink anything.

Have you watched what is going on in Spain ? Jack's wife has sent me an account of the play which was acted at Madrid and was the match to the gunpowder. It is a drama such as Huxley might have written if he had been a poet ; from end to end an outburst against Jesuitry and the powers of darkness. It is most interesting to find that Spain, of all countries in the world, is awake and that her young men are in revolt.

. . . Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

79.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

14 July 1901:

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am afraid that this is Swinburne at his worst,¹ and that he is referring to the election riots

¹ This must be ' Stratford on Avon, 27 June 1901 '. It was published in the *Saturday Review*, 6 July 1901, and reprinted in *A Channel Passage and other Poems*, 1904.

at Stratford when people were beaten and kicked because they dared to speak their minds about this wicked war. Swinburne's verse is doubly disgraceful because in the name of 'freedom' he applauds the tyranny which suppresses speech. What would he have said if this thing had happened in Russia! It is all too sad for words. I can hardly trust myself to write or speak about it, and I begin almost to wish myself out of a world like ours as it now is. Excepting Morley and Frederick Harrison, two agnostics, by the way, and neither of them divinities to me, there are no men of any note in politics who seriously believe that justice and morality are anything but what it is the fashion to call 'fads'.

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

80.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.
27 October 1901.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . Let me have a line to say how you are. I don't know if writing is a burden to you. It is not quite a burden to me yet, but it is becoming so, partly because I am so slow at it and partly because what I have now to say seems so unimportant. Then also as we grow old life becomes uneventful. But I do earnestly wish to hear about your health and about the children,

October 1901

[113

. . . Molly and I have been pretty well, but we are dreading the winter in this cold place, and if I can afford it I think we shall try a warmer climate, probably Torquay, for the worst months.

Be sure you tell me all about — . . . If the history of human heroism could be written *proportionately*, that is to say, not with regard to the publicity of the lives of the heroes and heroines, but with regard to the actual worth of what they did and suffered, what a different record it would be !

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

81.

9 St. James's Square, Bath.
24 December 1901.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Molly and I are staying in Bath for a little while. We came partly for a change and partly because a friend, Mr. Archibald Constable, grandson of Sir Walter Scott's Constable, is here and wished us to be his neighbours for a week or two. We like the city. It is full of memories of Landor and Jane Austen, and it has an air of eighteenth-century pomp, refreshing after the suburban villas of Crowborough.

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

82.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

15 April 1902.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was just about to write to you when your letter came. I was anxious to know how you had got through the winter. It is not, however, at an end here, for it has been bitterly cold the last three or four days, and this morning we are smothered in raw fog.

After leaving Bath, a city I liked as well as any I have seen in England, we went to Lyme Regis, a favourite spot with me, but now doomed, for a railway to it is being made, and the landowners and tradespeople are longing for development as they call it. Since I returned, my life has been uneventful. I am considerably troubled with old complaints, aggravated by the cold of this climate which I do not think I can endure another winter. At my age I want warmth. If this house were solidly built I might do better, but it is built to let and not to live in.

I have written a little notice of Caleb Morris which I will send you. It is a review in the *British Weekly* of a very poor biography of him. . . . You cannot imagine how often I dream of the happy days spent at Ryde with you and your dear husband, my best of friends, the friends of my youth; of all the country near you, of Nunwell, of Shanklin Down,

April 1902

115

of Wootton Bridge, of Brading, of Whitecliff Bay and St. Helens, of all our talk of Tennyson, of your Richard's memory for *In Memoriam*, of sunsets from Ryde Pier. It is worth while to have lived to have had such an experience. It lies still before me covered with the glory of a sinking sun.

. . . Yours with unchangeable affection,
W. HALE WHITE.

83.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.
3 September 1902.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I had not heard of Mr. Charles Colenutt's death. I have not seen him for many years. The picture I have of him in my mind is that of a robust, active man, such as he was when he was on the Town Council and used to come into the shop in Union Street. It would be mere affectation to grieve over his death, and I pray I may not have life on the terms on which it has latterly been granted to him. Your husband was preserved from such a penalty, and you and I ought to be thankful.

We enjoyed our visit to Freshwater, although our stay was so short. It was too far from Ryde, but every place near the Solent was crowded.

. . . Some years ago I had some correspondence with a Mrs. Louisa Tennyson, living at Freshwater, about the letters and papers in her possession

which relate to the Wordsworth and Coleridge families. She was the second wife of *our* Lord Tennyson's brother Arthur. I tried to find her at Freshwater, but found she had left and was living at Cranleigh. She has very kindly asked me to look over her treasures, which are most precious, and I think I shall go. She has inherited them from her relative, Mrs. Clarkson, Dorothy Wordsworth's intimate friend.

. . . If I had a copy I would send you the August number of the *Bookman* containing a few words I wrote at the editor's request on George Eliot. I understand that this August number is out of print. I hope somebody will be able to lend you the *Quarterly Review* for August so that you may read Swinburne's noble article on Dickens.

. . . Your ever affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

84.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough.
Tunbridge Wells.

21 March 1903.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am very glad to hear you are well. I have not been fortunate lately. About a month ago I fell down some steps under a railway and hurt my side. Then followed influenza. I am better now, but a cough remains which is rather troublesome at night.

. . . Whether we shall stay in Crowborough I cannot tell. I am in negotiation for a house at Groombridge which will be much more convenient for Willie and other friends, but there is not a complete settlement at present. I am very loth to move. I do not like the bother, and at my time of life I do not look forward to change with any enthusiasm. But Crowborough is so cold and so 'blasty', as little Dora Wordsworth used to say, that I do not think I could stand another winter.

Talking about Dora reminds me that I have now read all through those Dorothy letters, which you will recollect Mrs. Arthur Tennyson was going to send me. What a job! Folio sheets closely written, crossed and re-crossed such as women wrote before the penny postage. They are mostly domestic, news of the children, events in the village, &c., &c. The poverty of the Wordsworth household, combined with study, intelligence and high breeding in the proper sense of the word, is most interesting. In one of her letters Dorothy explains the method by which, turning hind part before, she has succeeded in adapting a pair of her brother's breeches into some kind of nether garment for her nephew. The next day she and Coleridge are talking poetry, philosophy and religion.

. . . Your ever affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

85.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
18 June 1903.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We moved last Monday in the wet! Fortunately we had taken lodgings. I saw the vans depart from Crowborough. Molly superintended the unloading and showed the talent of a general. She got back to the lodgings at eleven p.m. When we shall be settled I cannot say. There is a large old garden to our new abode with very big trees in it. It is almost too much of a garden for us, but we shall leave part of it wild.

. . . I will write further when I have a little more leisure.

. . . Your ever affectionate friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

86.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
1 August 1903.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . It was very pleasant to see Kate. It was a welcome proof of affection that she was willing to come here for a day, after thirty hours' travelling from Switzerland. It is not everybody who will take so much trouble for even a sincere friend.

We are now settling down, although two of our

rooms will not be papered until next year. The trouble is the garden. It is a beautiful, almost romantic place, with big trees in it, but it will cost me much more than I can afford to keep it in order. It will not, therefore, be kept in order. When I took the house I was driven into a corner and did not properly estimate garden expenses. The old chestnuts and beeches look down somewhat sadly on the motor-cars which rush by, tearing up the dust. We are on a main road much frequented by these stinking, hateful machines.

. . . I hope to be in Ryde before the winter sets in. Life is becoming very short, and no opportunity for a word or two with those we love ought to be missed.

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

87.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
9 October 1903.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am writing, not because I have any news for you, but in order that I may get news about yourself. . . . Our life here during the last three months has been monotonous, for we do not know many Groombridge people, in fact hardly any who are particularly interesting, and as I cannot move about without some fatigue I have been somewhat

pinned at home. The house we continue to like fairly well. It has advantages over the last in being old, domestic and comfortable, but I miss the magnificent expanse of sky we had before. However, houses don't make much difference to me. A little bit of food in the wrong place outweighs all the prospects in the world. We had a fright during the storm. Huge branches came down from the big trees in the garden, but the trees themselves stood firm.

I had hoped to be able to see you at Ryde this summer. I had fully intended to go for a day or two, but I was prevented and now I must put it off again. . . . My 'often infirmity' is a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, and his buffetings are too severe a penalty (I say it in all humility) for my sins.

Do please let me have a line or two from you to say how you are and how the children are. Has the wet summer upset you? It has hardly been summer here save for a few weeks in June; a depressing year so far, sunless and not good for much save weeds in the garden which have flourished with the most extraordinary pertinacity, defying all endeavours to exterminate or even to check them. A good year for all that is noxious. See how Chamberlain sprouts up in it!!

Yours ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

88.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

23 December 1903.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is kind of you to remember me, cheering in these dark days. I have hardly seen the sun for a week.

. . . I am glad you read the little book about Abbot Samson.¹ It was extraordinarily interesting to me as a picture of a time almost inconceivable, as well as a portrait of a remarkable person. Notice the strange incongruities of that century, or what we should think to be such, the really earnest piety, passionate piety in fact, and the moral shortcomings; lovely art and ferocity. Allen, the publisher, has sent me some Ruskin drawings this morning. Many of them are of mediaeval Italian architecture. Its grace and delicacy are exquisite, there is nothing in the woods in spring more tender. Yet what was the history of the Italian states and cities during the times when these churches and houses were being built? How foolish it is to dogmatize about nations and men, or to attempt inclusion of them in neat little summaries!

Molly is busy with a plum pudding for an old woman who lives in the cottage next door to us.

¹ *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond. A picture of Monastic Life in the days of Abbot Samson.*

She is eighty-four, and I met her the day before yesterday without bonnet or cloak and with a pail on her arm. She was going up the hill to the spring to fetch water. She is always cheery and may be said to live alone, for the only other inmate of the cottage is a little grandson of whom she takes care. She never, of course, sees a newspaper. This, perhaps, is the reason why she is in perfect health.

. . . Affectionately as always,

W. HALE WHITE.

89.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

20 February 1904.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . I have nearly finished my Dorothy Wordsworth letters in the *Athenaeum*. Next Saturday will perhaps conclude them. You see most of the weekly papers, I think. I remember that they were brought home on Saturday always from an Institute or Reading Room. In to-day's *Speaker* you will find a paper of mine on Galileo¹ which may interest you. I was pressed to write something, and the new *Life of Galileo*² had been quite a discovery to me.

I don't make, though, many discoveries now, and find it more profitable to occupy myself with those already made. A Roman Catholic friend,³ however,

¹ 'How can we tell?' Reprinted in *Last Pages*.

² See p. 237.

³ See p. 236.

who has been here to see me has been an attractive study to me. She is cousin to Rose La Touche, whom Ruskin wanted to marry. She is an able woman, and her Biblical criticism is much more liberal than that of most of the English clergy, although she is very devout. The power which we possess of combining apparent opposites in our minds is singular, but I am quite sure that this lady is quite sincere and sees no contradiction in what she believes.

. . . I have just been round the garden. Once more the snowdrops and crocuses, once more another spring is bursting. I trust it will bring you another message of hope and peace.

My beloved grandson Bobbie, one of the brightest boys that ever gladdened a grandfather, has this minute come to spend the Sunday with me. His mother put him in the train and here he is.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

90.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

18 May 1904.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . It was a great delight to me to see you again, and as I wandered last Sunday week morning through Yaverland and under Bembridge Down along a well-remembered path I was not alto-

gether sad, although Richard went with me all the way.

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

91.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

11 August 1904.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . Swinburne's poem in *Harper's Magazine* shows all his old strength and command of form.¹ Substantially he is always on the right side, although I think there is a meaning in the Old Testament and in Saint Paul which he has not seized and perhaps could not understand. Saint Paul, I confess, is hard, and I never read him without feeling that I have to stretch myself mightily in order to accommodate myself to him. In fact, the last time I tried the Epistle to the Romans I had to give it up. Still, he does stand for something; his character is noble, and there is much truth in what has often been said, that Christianity is his work. Swinburne's new preface is very good. I specially applauded his defence against the charge of egotism. There is a frank egotism like that of Wordsworth, to take Swinburne's example, which is innocent and in no way repulsive. It is quite different from conceit. It cares nothing for applause; self is not the centre of it.

¹ 'The Altar of Righteousness,' *Harper's Magazine*, June 1904; reprinted in *A Channel Passage and other Poems*.

Yes ; France and the Pope have greatly interested me. I shall not live long enough to see the end of that conflict. Sometimes I fear darkness will in the end prevail. I get very disheartened about the future at times. I have a Russian friend who was aide-de-camp to Alexander II and was intimate with him. He was a General in the Russian army, and knows Russia thoroughly. He tells me that the people abhor this war and that it was begun by the Tsar and finance-mongers and is maintained by them. The Tsar hates the Japanese, because when he was in their country he was wounded in the face by a fanatic, and the capitalists, amongst whom is a Jew who has the Tsar's confidence, are eager for concessions in the Corea. The Japanese are not worthy of complete sympathy, nor indeed of much of it. They have taken up all that is worst and materialistic in European civilization ; they want to rule the extreme East, and the speculator and jobber pull the strings. It is shocking beyond words but it is true that wars are begun and carried on, hundreds of thousands of people are killed and industry is stifled by the passion or greed of half a dozen madmen or thieves.

Molly is very well. She has her nephew Bobbie with her. I have not been very well lately. I have had a miserable faintness, not exactly fainting, but oppression and depression, hanging about me. It is an old and familiar enemy. I should like

to go away for a month or six weeks if I could be transported with no trouble to some quiet place. I do hate travelling.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

92.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
23 October 1904.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . I, like you, have bought the new edition of Swinburne. There are some poems I wish he had omitted, but there are others which are unsurpassable. I cannot have enough of them—the ‘Sea-mew’ and a ‘Word with the Wind’ for example. I read them out aloud to myself so that I may not miss their miraculous music.

I have also been reading *Shirley* and *Jane Eyre* again, once more to fall passionately in love with your old heroine, Caroline Helstone. Unluckily and improperly I am also in love with Jane, but I hope that in heaven bigamy will not be a crime. I stick to my conclusion that no man nor woman has ever half-way ascended the mountain on the summit of which Charlotte and Emily Brontë are enthroned. I am glad to find that at seventy-three my adoration of these two sisters is as profound as it was forty years ago.

. . . Your ever affectionate friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

93.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

11 December 1904.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . Like you I have been re-reading Swinburne in the new edition, and much of his poetry now is in a new light to me. When he was young and I was young I was repelled by what are obvious defects. They are still defects to me, but the balance on the other side is so great that I let them alone.

It is pleasant to know that there is anything in the little Bunyan book¹ which interests you. At first I refused to undertake the task, for I thought it was one for which I was unfit, but on pressure I yielded. Complaint has been made that I have given too much of Bunyan and too little of myself, but this is no reproach. If a biographer really is in earnest about his subject, his object will be to present him and not to use him as a peg on which to hang matter of no consequence to the world whatever.

. . . Most affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

I should have sent you a copy of the Bunyan if my dislike to offer anything of my own had not prevented.

¹ *John Bunyan*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1905.

94.

6 Alexandra Gardens,
Ventnor.
3 June 1905.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am very glad to hear the news about Charlie, and I trust he will be able to stick to the diet. Everything depends on that. I ate all the Wroxall bread, but I found it indigestible as it is clammy and what we call 'close'.

I intended to come to Ryde to-day, but I am not quite right this morning and am better at home. I am sorry, but nevertheless I have seen you and hope before long to see you again. Of course there is no house to me now in all the world like yours. You are the last to me of those early days.

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

95.

37 Royal Parade, Eastbourne.
17 October 1905.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We came here for a fortnight in order to get away from Groombridge. We go back next Friday. Our stay at Eastbourne has not been pleasant, for the wind has been northerly, very cold and not one hour from the sea, so that the horizon is clouded and there has been no colour anywhere.

. . . I have been thinking much on one point



THE STUDY AT GROOMBRIDGE

of resemblance between my sister Henrietta and yourself. She never fell away to any artificial religion. She never believed that a supernatural creed was necessary for the training of children. The example of father and mother was, she knew, the only effectual religion for a child. I wish I could discover one or two more people of her temper. How you find it, I cannot say, but I see so many examples, especially amongst young women, of weak clutching at ceremonies and creeds and occasionally of perversion to extreme forms of Anglicanism. They have no strength of their own to stand without this poor and hollow support. It used to vex me and provoke opposition. It now merely saddens me and I hold my tongue, reflecting that it is an indication of what no argument can cure. If they are relieved by genuflexions and incense and candles, and if life becomes any simpler to them through doctrines of which they can give no intelligible account, I must not quarrel with them. So they are made.

I hope Charlie is improving and that he does not weary of his diet. It is trying to be compelled to deny yourself variation in food, to see all the delicious things in shop windows, wines, fruits, &c. &c., and to be compelled to stick to cocoa and fish. That is my case, although Charlie's ailment is not mine.

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

96.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
23 December 1905.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

My best love to you. Seventy-four was I yesterday! We are both well, if my small troubles be excepted. Two stumps extracted, two broken bits of bone removed, and the end is not yet.

I have had the *Christmas Carol* given me, but I have not yet looked at it. I read, however, Swinburne's contribution in the newspaper¹ and thought it a good specimen of his miraculous gift.

. . . I am now a very idle creature, that is to say I do no work, but just in proportion as the work dwindles to nothing, all kinds of little things demand attention. However, I have read again a book which is one of the truest, and in some respects one of the saddest, bits of human experience—I mean Sir Walter Scott's *Journal*. It is profoundly interesting and touching. Nobody without studying it can have any notion of what Sir Walter really was. I remember the effect it produced on me soon after it came out fifteen or sixteen years ago, and age has increased my sympathy.

Our sincerest good wishes for the new year.

¹ 'A Carol for Charity', in the *Times*, 16 December 1905, reprinted in *The Queen's Carol*, 1905.

At seventy-four a new year looks misty and doubtful.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

My grandson Leonard has just passed twelfth out of the *Britannia*. He is now a middy and goes away on a three-years' cruise.

97.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
9 January 1906.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I saw Mars and Saturn last night. I have also, wonderful to relate, seen Mercury for two mornings running, by walking up to the top of our hill between six and seven. Very few people have ever seen him, as he is always so near the sun. How magical the daybreak is in winter when the sky is clear and has been washed with rain. This afternoon we have had a heavy thunderstorm with torrents of rain. A motor-car was caught in it, but I did not weep.

. . . As to Russia what can be said? Who knows what is going on there? The probability is that the newspapers and the Tsar are all liars. You and I will not live to see it, but there will be such an earthquake before long as the civilized world has never beheld.

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

98.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
[February 1906.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am glad you have the Swinburne *Tragedies*. I bought them also, for in this collected edition there are some I have not read. I cannot recall the Orchard. I must have been there, for I know Niton.

This winter has been rather a trial to me. Molly has been away for three weeks and has just come back. The weather has been for the most part sunless, favourable perhaps for toadstools, although I think even toadstools like warmth, but not favourable to happy thoughts or to health. However, no murmuring; patience, patience.

I did marvel at ——'s ambition to be returned again for Portsmouth. He is older than I am. My friend Bright is like him, only he is much younger. I should have said that rest is the one thing needful for him. He has his business at Rochdale, he is a director of the London and North-Western Railway, he has a wife and children, a delightful wife, and he goes into Parliament for Oldham. He can do no good there. No good can be done there by anybody. I am in despair when I look round and see the monstrous evils of society waiting for redress and reflect that the House of Commons is going to waste weeks over

what is called the 'religious question'. Walk up Whitechapel, as I did the other day, and then read Lord Halifax to the effect that the matter which is of urgent importance is instruction of children in the doctrines of apostolic succession, sacramental efficacy and the Trinity! Not even savage decency, and sacramental grace is the remedy! The awful absurdity is just as glaring at the other end of town, in Bond Street and Hyde Park. The Dissenters are as bad with their 'Bible without note or comment'.

. . .

5 March 1906.

So far had I written more than a week ago. Last Monday I was suddenly seized with influenza, went to bed, and here I have been for seven days. The temperature has gone down, but a cough has been left which prevents rest at night and I am weak. Of course, I am not so well able now as I was ten years ago to throw off an attack of this kind. When I can move I should dearly love to get to the sea. There were some wonderful lodgings at Bonchurch, right on the shore, but I am not sure what the effect of the sea would be on a rough night.

. . . Most affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

99.

1 Maze Hill Terrace,
St. Leonards-on-Sea.

14 May 1906.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Our next-door neighbour at Groombridge has lent us this little villa to which she comes now and then. We wanted to escape from paint and cleaning. I do not like St. Leonards, but we save the expense of lodgings.

Did you not once tell me you knew the cottage at Niton where Lady Mary Gordon lived? Was it Orchard Cottage, and whereabouts is it in Niton? She was, if I remember rightly, Swinburne's aunt, and he dedicated the *Sisters* to her. I had some thought of coming to the Island again this spring, but the offer of this house prevented me. I found amongst some old books here Barber's *Views*, and have been amusing myself with looking at the pictures. I do not know the date of Barber, but when I went round the Island in 1845 or 1846 it was not so very much altered. There were only about half a dozen houses at Sandown. It was then, and in many parts is now, as complete a romance as it is in Swinburne's wonderful lines.

I had the news not long ago of a remarkable death. Mrs. Tylor, who used to live at Carshalton, a Quaker lady, eighty-four years old, in possession of every faculty, goes to the Meeting-house, calls in the afternoon on her friend and mine, Mrs. J. A.

Bright, returns home, lies down to rest, prays ' Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,' and passes away in perfect peace. That is as it should be, and as perhaps it would almost always be if our fathers and mothers and ourselves were what they and we ought to be.

I cannot get over the effects of the influenza. I had three weeks in bed, and although there is nothing apparently the matter with me, the depression will not remove and I cannot walk a mile without weariness. It is a most mysterious disease. I do not think the doctor did me much good except keeping me between the blankets, but my excellent nurse was a blessing, and not the least part of it was that I felt she spared worry to Molly and other people. If you should ever be laid up (I pray you never may be), get a trained nurse at once.

. . . Most affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

100.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
12 August 1906.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . I fancy the summer must have been rather trying to you. Here the drought has been distressing, and I have suffered as much from burnt-up garden and dust as from physical ailments. We are now beginning to dread a water famine, and there is no sign of a change. In

addition to the troubles Nature inflicts on us there are worse from motor-cars. Molly and I had the narrowest escape this week. A friend was driving us up hill in a four-wheel dog-cart. The horse was walking, and we met a farmer's cart. Down the hill came a motor-car at a great pace, and instead of slackening till it could get past the farmer's cart which was just abreast of us, it aimed at squeezing between at full speed. About twenty yards in front of us the driver saw this was impossible, and just before he touched our horse's nose he ran his car on the foot-path. It turned over into the ditch and somehow got out, but with a broken wheel. Most miraculously nobody was hurt. If our friend had been driving the horse she often takes out, there would have been an end of us.

I suppose that, like me, you take little or no interest in the miserable squabbles over the Education Bill. They are sickening if we reflect on what has to be done and never will be done. The upper classes in this country have had the benefit of 'dogmatic' teaching. Are they any the better for it? Is London 'society' purer than the East end? Everybody tells me that 'society' was never madder nor more immoral than it has been during this season of 1906, and I must say that I myself nowhere see, either in the City or at the West end, any of the regenerative influences of the Catechism and the Creeds.

. . . Your affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

101.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

19 August 1906.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . I saw in the paper that the motor-cars are to be withdrawn from the Island. Happy Island!

Likewise I saw the death of Miss Sewell, and that she was taken up to St. Catherine's Down to put coins in the monument built there when the allied Sovereigns came over in 1815. I do not understand this. I never heard of any such monument. I always thought the Sea-mark was much older. Miss Sewell was a remarkable woman. I wonder if you knew her. It was her brother who wrote *Christian Morals*, worth reading, notwithstanding its Tractarianism.

Your ever affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

. . . It may perhaps have been the monument at the back of the down, the one you see from Sandown station.

102.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

13 November 1906.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I do most heartily and affectionately con-

gratulate you that you have reached your eightieth birthday in health of mind and body. You have good reason to rejoice. I know no woman who has better reason. You have had a great loss, but it was all in Nature's way, and for half a century you owned the noblest husband you could have found in the kingdom. Your children have been devoted to you, and you have friends who have never been happier than when they have been with you. I do repeat that you have had a blessed life, and that you have blessed all who have come near you. Nobody more than W. H. W.

103.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
10 December 1906.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your card, waiting for me when I came in from my walk, was a delightful surprise to me. May your joy and hope continue! You say you cling to friends for support. You think so, but, as I have told you before, your friends look to you, and have always looked to you. Not only those who ask for counsel direct, but those who, absent, are always silently referring to you. I believe that, of all help, this does most for us.

. . . Most affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

104.

The Cottage, Groombridge,
Tunbridge Wells.

29 January 1907.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . I wonder if there is anybody now living who saw John Sterling when he was at Ventnor just before his death in 1844. I have been asked to write a preface to a reprint of Carlyle's *Life*. I should like to shake hands with somebody who had set eyes on Sterling. I am fearful that I shall not be able to execute my commission. I should dearly love to undertake it. I have been looking into Hare's biography, and have been much struck with Sterling's vivacity and courage up to within twenty-four hours of his death, when he *knew* he was dying, and also with his abandonment of all theology as the end came near. A lovelier soul than his was never incarnated on earth. What a friend he must have been !

. . . Yours ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

105.

The Cottage, Groombridge,
Tunbridge Wells.

13 July 1907.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I should be glad of a word or two to say how you are. Of ourselves I have hardly any news to

tell you. Molly has just come back after a fortnight in a house-boat on one of the Broads in Norfolk, and is much the better for the change and the out-of-door life. The weather in Norfolk has not been so cold, dark, and damp as it has been with us. I had thought of going away but could not face it when the time came, and have been obliged to content myself with mooning over my books and paying visits of a day to friends. At the house of one of them, by the way, I met a daughter of Mrs. Gaskell. She, the daughter, is a very intelligent, interesting woman. Not long before I had read, and almost cried over, that wonderful story of the *Moorland Cottage*, which I suppose you know. I had not looked at it for a long while, and had almost forgotten it.

What has become of ——, and who has succeeded —— at ——? It makes me sad sometimes to think that the result of his life was not what might have been expected from his gifts. I doubt if his congregation was permanently influenced by him. But on the other hand we always demand too much. If he helped two or three, can we say that the effect was not proportionate to the cause, not knowing how deep the effect was or where it will cease? Besides, he acted out his own convictions and we ought to be satisfied.

. . . Much love from your old friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

106.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

17 October 1907.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

The last time I heard from you you were troubled with gout and sciatica. I hope they are gone, and that you are able to look forward to another autumn and winter with hope and courage.

Since I wrote to you an old friend has departed, Allen, Ruskin's publisher. He underwent an operation from which it was supposed he was recovering. During this operation another trouble was discovered, which could not be reached, and would have caused death after nine or ten months of agony. Suddenly, and most mercifully, he sank and was at rest, spared all anticipation and prolonged suffering.

I have not been away from home this year. I ought to go, but I shrink from travelling. More than ever should I love to set eyes on the sea. Our house, in many ways, with its old garden and big trees, is lovely, but I pine for the illimitable outlook. I can get a far-away horizon in five minutes, but that does not satisfy me and I want the Atlantic before my bedroom window. This is stupidly unreasonable. A more pressing need is some insurrectionary neighbours in this most proper, most conservative village. Mrs. Cobden-

Sanderson, whom I used to know well years ago, spent a day with me a few weeks back, and although I could not get up enthusiasm for her cause,¹ her own enthusiasm was delightful. She is a convict and was in Holloway prison. She sent for the governor one morning, and asked him if bugs were a part of the prison discipline, because, if so, she would calmly endure them. If they were not, she would like to be removed to another apartment. Her gipsy-black hair has turned quite white, but she is as handsome at fifty as she was at twenty-five. The ancient home of the Cobden race near Midhurst still belongs to the family.

. . . I went yesterday evening, as I often do, to spend an hour with my next-door neighbour,² an old lady—somewhere between seventy-five and eighty—the only woman in Groombridge who reads books. She can easily learn poetry by heart even now. She repeated to me, as she knitted, three poems, one by Trench, another by Kingsley, and the third was Tennyson's 'Will'. The last, she learnt two or three weeks ago. She is a singular survival of Toryism and Church, but very shrewd and commanding.

. . . Most affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

¹ Woman's Suffrage.

² Mrs. Oswell.

April 1908

143

107.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

24 April 1908.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am very glad to find you are well. We have had a sad winter. About three months ago Molly was suddenly seized with influenza. She seemed to be getting better when, in about a month after the first attack, she had a relapse and the doctor ordered her to go to Hastings. She then had phlebitis, and was obliged to consult the doctor there. Phlebitis is a clot or lump in the leg. She came home the day before yesterday, and her nurse leaves to-day, but she is not to walk more than fifty yards a day just yet. Excepting for about three weeks we have had a nurse all the time.

. . . As to myself I have escaped serious ailments. I have been troubled with rheumatism, and just now I am enjoying a disagreeable cold. Every day I am hoping for a break in the weather. Yesterday it snowed heavily for more than twelve hours, and this morning it is very cold. When the wind turns and we smell the Atlantic once more I dare say we shall forget our troubles like a dream.

. . . Most affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

LETTERS TO MISS PARTRIDGE

[SOPHIA S. PARTRIDGE, born 10 August 1844, died 29 May 1918.

MISS PARTRIDGE first became acquainted with my husband when they were both living at Ashted in Surrey. She has told me that for many years she had noticed him on his daily walk to the station, accompanied by his daughter and a beautiful collie dog. He always carried a number of books in a strap. Eventually they got to know one another, but this was only a short time before the death of his wife in 1891, when he retired from the Admiralty and went to live in Hastings. The correspondence begins soon after this move.

So far as I know, none of the letters from Miss Partridge are in existence, though it is clear that one at least should have been preserved.¹ I have in my possession, however, a few written to myself in recent years and can form from them some idea of what her share in this correspondence would be like, the ardent spirit, the keen intellect, the courage, and the strange disregard of self. For the last seven years she was an invalid, almost entirely confined to her bed, with her heart in a very critical condition, brave and buoyant to the last. Fortunately I had finished making a copy of these

¹ See p. 285.

letters to her friend before she died, and, therefore, had been able to send her a list of questions to which she wrote or dictated answers clearing up doubtful points.

Six letters to Mabel Marsh ¹ are inserted in this series, Nos. 13, 15, 27, 29, 34, 35.² They were sent to me after her death by her husband ; there had been others, but they had been destroyed. These find here, I think, a fitting place.

Reference should be made to entries in the *Groombridge Diary* under the dates 22 May, 23 July, 6 September 1908.

D. V. W.

1922.]

I.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.

26 October 1893.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

As Molly is writing, I venture to add a post-script. When you have time we should like to know a little news about Ashtead. . . . Tell me all about your sisters, what they are doing ; how the Battersea work goes on, &c., &c. When you retire (! !) you will find that you are greedy of personal news. You will like to hear of Jack and Tom and Nancy and Poll in preference perhaps to Plato or Tennyson.

We have had a pleasant creature staying here, a Miss Maitland, Principal of Somerville Hall,

¹ See note, p. 154.

² Also see note on letter No. 7.

Oxford. She had much to say that was interesting about the new generation of young women and about Oxford society, which undoubtedly must be delightful, but I should fancy that if a member of it is not chained down to some scholarly task, the chances are that he will become somewhat vagrant and intellectually dissipated. However, I mustn't talk about intellectual dissipation, for surely I have been lately the idlest of mortals, as Carlyle said, 'extant on this planet'. An hour or two's real study in the morning, a lounge on the hill, a novel of George Sand's in the afternoon, another lounge and a little Virgil in the evening—behold my day! I should like to have the privilege of a talk with you now and then upon all sorts of subjects. We have many acquaintances here, but scarcely any friends. The nearest approach to one is Mrs. Dannreuther; but though in a way we are intimate, I find the utter dissimilarity of previous history is a bar to close intercourse. She is Greek and has no appreciation of the religious experiences of this country. Now, although many of us may more or less widely have separated ourselves from the Christianity of the day, Christianity in a way is in our very blood and all our thoughts are coloured by it. We cannot, or at least I cannot, come very near to a person to whom the Bible is nothing whatever, and all the literature that has clustered round it mere ecclesiastical and professional jabber.

Kindest regards to your brother and sisters. Has Emma¹ now any special puzzle about which she *pretends* to know nothing?

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

2.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.
15 November 1893.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

To begin—without preface—It is a curious fact that the two great Christian poems, the *Divine Comedy* and the *Paradise Lost*, should be defective as works of art, that is to say, that the theme should be one not suitable for pure art. Goethe never cared for either. But let us see what is to be said on the other side, taking up the points in your criticism as we go along. You say Milton's Heaven is extraordinary. So it is, but consider Milton's position. He had to make an epic out of the existing Heaven of theology, and what could he possibly do with it? The wonder to me is that, having allotted to him such a background as the Jewish paradise, such *dramatis personae* as God or rather Jehovah, Adam, Eve, and the devil, he has managed to do what he has with them. Compare what he had, cut and dried for him, with what Shakespeare had, even in Holinshed's *History of England*, to say nothing of Plutarch. Well, it may be said, why did he take such material?

¹ Miss Emma Partridge.

The reason was that the Greek nation had its religion made epic in Homer, the Latin in Virgil, the Catholic Church in Dante, and Milton was fired with a noble ambition to give an epic to his own religion. His own religion, however, instead of being objective was metaphysical, and this was the difficulty. The most interesting personage is naturally the one, Satan, for whom no provision is made in the legend; the one who is Milton's own creation. In the Bible it is not the devil who tempted Eve. The book of Genesis knows nothing of the devil. Eve fell through the witchery of the serpent.

What you say about Eve is nearly all true, but then Adam and Eve are mere hero and heroine put there to be lost, mere x, y, z for the human race.

As to Satan I need not waste a word on him, because the magnificence of that conception is obvious. He is so great that, as you yourself observe, we cannot believe that what he is opposing is good. Mark that the cause of the celestial revolt was Satan's scorn to serve; nothing meaner. Mark also that Milton's power is so singular that the Miltonic Satan has entirely superseded the Satan of the Bible.

I do not agree with Tennyson that the charm of the *Paradise Lost* is the 'brooks mazily murmuring'. In the first place, there is the verse. There simply is *no* such verse in the English language. Read it aloud and you will see. Take such lines as :

Dark'nd so, yet shone
Above them all th'archangel : but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrencht, and care
Sat on his faded cheek—

'Shone' you see, still 'shone', although his check was 'faded'. There is nothing in all literature to surpass that, and this leads me on to the selection of a certain *dauntlessness*, a certain heroic attitude towards life, magnanimity in the old sense of the word as Milton's central virtue to me. Life, too, is to him something grand, great, something transacted with Heaven looking on, something in which Heaven is interested.

I don't wonder at your being charmed by *Specimen Days*, but, my dear Miss Partridge, pray for mercy's sake don't let any 'respectable' person know you have Whitman in your possession. I have had him in mine for five-and-twenty years, but I never dared so much as mention his name save to the fewest of the few. Ashtead, perhaps, has not heard of him, but if it has, expect to be cursed with bell, book, and candle, and burnt in effigy. *Specimen Days*, of course, is one of his harmless productions.

The story about the Unitarian hairdressing is exquisite. Molly was staying with some Unitarian friends a little while ago, and they considered the use of bath gloves a Unitarian custom, and thought that Trinitarians always mopped themselves with bits of flannel.

Now—what made me answer your letter so promptly was the desire to know when you will come here. At the present moment, or rather in a fortnight's time, there will be what the auctioneers call 'an eligible opportunity'. Mrs. Dannreuther has left us the whole of her big house, to do with it what we like. In a fortnight we shall be free. A friend whom we expect will have left, and I shall have got off my hands a new edition of my *Spinoza* which has much occupied me of late. There will be plenty of bedroom accommodation both for you and Emma too—nice bedrooms—not like the little cabin overhead. Please perpend and let me know. If Emma would consent, we should be delighted.

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

3.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.
19 March 1894.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

I cannot help adding a word by way of a postscript to Molly's letter. I was very sorry not to come, but the truth is that at the last moment my resolution, weakened by one of my customary attacks, fairly fell flat before that enormous railway journey. I find that my special temptation, my 'thorn', is dislike to move, although of exercise I never have too much.

I made exactly the same remark about Lord

Salisbury's speech. Anybody can enlarge on our ignorance. I fancy his object, although he did not say so distinctly, and could not say it then, was to insinuate a distrust of scientific results and a corresponding confidence, or at least faith, in those which are theological. 'What is it we really know? Who can tell what ether is? Nobody can say within millions of years how old the world is,' &c., &c. You see that there is a great opportunity for the theologian when the mind has been wrought into this frame.

The real service to be done is that which would laboriously and faithfully collect from the sciences all well-established facts, and there are not a few, which might be a basis for spiritualism and for hope. . . .

I am nearly sure I have heard you speak of that cousin at Bath. One of the most painful effects of death on the survivor is—or at least it is so in my case—that it renews those 'obstinate questionings' which have been asked so many times before and are each time unprovided with an answer.

If it is not too late, give my love to Emma. Tell her I shall often, often think of her and watch for news of the 'Gulf of Siam'.¹ You may be quite sure that when I am able to hoist myself, I shall find my way to Ashtead. I wish it had been possible to remain there. This place is all very well, but it is frightfully lonely, and sometimes

¹ Miss Emma Partridge was going to Australia.

I think I shall lose my power of expressing anything beyond the wants of a monkey.

Kindest regards to yourself and all at home.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

4.

9 High Wickham, Hastings.

3 March 1895.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

Molly did not return till yesterday afternoon, and I did not have your note in time for an answer by yesterday's post. I will send you 10s. 6d. to-morrow, and you must apportion my weekly share as you find necessary, taking your other subscriptions into account and letting me know when you want any more.¹

... I understand you are reading Virgil. I cannot tell you what I feel towards him. No relationship is certainly so tender and so intimate. He has gone closer to me than any other man living or dead, and his pathos is all the more affecting because it is masked by a remote and antique story. It may be, and is indeed often the fact—witness Milton's 'Epitaphium Damonis'—that the more intricate the folds of the drapery, the more intense is the life underneath. What is too much a part of ourselves to be spoken directly may be said obliquely by Dido or Thyrsis or put in the

¹ Miss Partridge adds a note to this letter, 'Something Emma was interested in'.

form of a myth. Virgil, too, is so modern. His hopes, his despairs are those of to-day, more so than anything to which the authors of to-day, at any rate, can give expression. Then his art! Whatever may be the depth of his passion or the rapture of his inspiration, it is all confined and curbed in the loveliest form, and he knows how to make musical that which in us would be mere inarticulate raving.

What lines! For example:

Why does fear shake thy limbs before the trumpet sounds—

But I become incoherent.

The best translation is that which is absolutely word for word literal. On the whole, I much prefer the Globe version by Lonsdale and Lee. . . . Of course, nothing can give any notion of the Virgilian melody and his marvellous word-selection. You must recollect that you have before you a prose rendering of a more exquisite master than Ruskin, Shelley, or Tennyson.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

5.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

17 November 1896.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

The first point in your delightful letter is Dorking. I have wondered why you go to Dorking

and whether you know anybody there. (I remember: Miss Marsh.¹) It was one of the places on which I set my heart when I left Ashtead, and I saw a most lovely old house in the middle of the town which almost bewitched me into settlement, but, alas, it was too big, and, worst of all, close to the church, whence descended day and night chimes, and all kinds of ecclesiastical tintinabulations. I heard of another on Ranmore Common the other day, but do not believe in any such luck. For forty years I have never seen anything to be let in that paradise.

Next point—you don't like to be astonished in music—whence you advance to the generalization that astonishment is not enjoyment. I know very little about music, but entirely agree with you that anything which thrusts the player's personality to the fore is most objectionable. That is why I prefer orchestral music to solos. As to the wider argument, I am not sure, but I suppose it is as true as most abstract statements, which is not saying much. Certainly, in literature, if that which astonishes is merely an event, it does not interest

¹ Mabel Marsh, formerly a pupil at the School in Bath where Miss Partridge had been a mistress. She was very delicate, suffering from bad heart trouble. At this time she was teaching in a family near Dorking. Left motherless at seven years old, and her father an invalid, she had earned her own living by teaching from the age of 18. On 5 April 1910 she married Mr. Guy Lloyd (see *Groombridge Diary*, p. 10). She was born 3 April 1870, and she died 2 April 1913.

me, but if it be an event which carries an astonishing meaning, the case is altered.

Thirdly—you don't inform me who the lady is who wanted to know what a soul was. She must live near you. Why don't you call and explain to her you have come in pure Christian pity, because if she doesn't know what a soul is, how can she know what it is to save one, and if she doesn't know this, why—but the very thought is too dreadful. You might begin negatively by showing what a soul is not, and then proceed in approved philosophical order positively, by taking soul in its lowest manifestation, quoting the opinion of various learned divines that animals have souls as far down as pigs, the swine-soul being mercifully created for man's especial benefit to save the expense of salt.

Fourthly—Morris. *News from Nowhere* I have not read. The author is rather too large a subject for the pen of such a slow writer as myself. I knew him slightly, knew his work very well, knew his intimate friends also very well, and he has been for years a sort of text on which to hang all kinds of preachments and disquisitions. His death was a great shock to me. His most effectual service was not, I think, done by his books, but by his art and by the immense aid he gave in the preservation of our landscapes and buildings. It is depressing to see that what has always happened when anything original, from Christianity downwards,

has been born into the world is being exactly repeated with Morris. He creates lovely forms, mixes lovely colours, prints from lovely types, creates a whole new sphere of pleasure and beauty, and behold! before he is dead, appears the inevitable ape! More pernicious than absolute denial, flat contradiction, is this base simulation; this counterfeit, and more obstructive to the truth. Suburban builders' Queen Anne, 'art' colours, Yankee forgeries, worse than if we had had no Morris. And yet (for if we did not believe it how could we live?) something true survives. You and I are really better for what happened 1896 years ago.

Fifthly—H——. He is 'eaten up with vanity'. Nothing else left.

Sixthly—Democracy in literature. A good subject. *For*—Burns, Keats, Shakespeare, Bunyan. *Against*—a whole crowd, Milton, Spenser, &c., &c., &c., but it must be observed that with many of these the University education was an uninfluencing accident. The evil effects of Oxford and Cambridge have always seemed to be a certain priggishness and uniformity of view. External differences there may be, but, in the main, life is looked at in the same way. Of course a Milton or a Johnson looks at things in his own way, but the lesser men conform. The crowning advantage of the University is Greek and Latin. Nothing can make up for the loss of a training on the classical

model, for an education by a Virgil or a Horace, consummate masters of form to such a degree that their words are *things*, powers, more than our ideas. Ach Gott, from Virgil to the *Daily Chronicle*—whither have we travelled! The Virgilian or Horatian attitude towards life and its great problems is partly communicable by translation, but not altogether. It makes all the difference in the world whether a man puts his thought on death, for example, in ordinary prose or in absolutely perfect verse, perfect absolutely in music and above everything in measure without one unessential word. I say this quite impartially, because I never was at a University—the London University is not one—and was never properly taught Latin or Greek.

Lastly, as to my poor self. Yes, I am still maundering on with Coleridge, Wordsworth and Co., writing now and then for the *Athenaeum* and with a couple of larger jobs on the same subject in front of me. You see I am an old official mill-horse, and was obliged, when real work ceased and I no longer had to grind anything, to go round and round just for nothing but because I had always been used to that kind of motion.

Now you have had a nice dose and so good-night. Molly sends her best love. She is bicycling, French conversationing, ambulancing, University Extensioning, and is going to play golf.

. . . Kindest regards. Wish I could look in and

have a talk about many things which won't rise by correspondence.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

I was wrong about the learned divines and the swine-soul. It was an old heathen named Chrysippus who was the author of that little bit of psychology. Learned divines, though, have doubtless adopted it.

6.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

16 February 1897.*

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

Please excuse most infirm handwriting.¹ I have been in bed for a fortnight and laid up for three weeks with neuritis, which, being translated, means intense pain, rising occasionally to 'fits' in a nerve running from the back of the neck down the right arm. The paroxysms have now abated and have left dull aches and partial uselessness. I can take no narcotics and consequently had simply to bear. Injection of morphia was impossible, as the doctor was generally not at hand when I most wanted him. Enough.

Will you please give me Miss Marsh's Dorking address? She can very likely tell me who is the principal auctioneer and house agent there, a fact

¹ Writing just as good as usual.

I wish to ascertain. . . . I have come to the end of my tether : arm won't work any more.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

One more screw ! I met somebody this morning to whom I complained with some bitterness that I should not mind so much all this agony if I could feel that it did me any good ; made me more tolerable to my friends or improved my morals. It would also be partly explicable and bearable if I knew that it saved some other person any suffering. As far as I could see, however, it was gratuitous, useless, and most mischievous.

My friend turned on me and said seriously ' It is your kharma (? spelling). Become a theosophist and the riddle will be solved.' I was struck all of a heap, for I didn't know that the friend was of that ' persuasion '. What is a ' kharma ' ?

7.¹

8 }
II } September 1897.

I feel so strongly upon the question of clerical subscription that I hope you will forgive me if my language should appear violent. The point is what do *people understand us to mean* when we use

¹ This letter is marked as having been sent to M. A. Marsh. I take it to be a copy in Mabel Marsh's handwriting of a letter which Mr. White had sent to her, made for the benefit of Miss Partridge. It does not profess to be complete. There are corrections in the copy. How they got there I do not

certain words? Nobody supposes that a man is really dear to us when we say 'Dear Sir'. But if a clergyman should tell his congregation that he has signed the 39 Articles, or if his congregation should know that he has signed them, would they consider that it was a mere form signifying nothing? If a man, to gain his own ends, repeats a phrase, which to the majority of his hearers conveys a sense different from that which he intends, he misleads; if he knows that he misleads, he lies.

There is no theological dogma so important as the duty of veracity. It is the lack of veracity which is the curse of all our institutions, trade,

know, but I follow the corrections in each case as I am pretty sure they must be his. The copy being incomplete I cannot vouch for there being no excisions, and I do not know what came before or after. Finally, it does not seem to me quite satisfactory. May there not be something to say on the other side? Compare his own words to Mrs. Colenutt, 20 Feb. 1904, about 'the power which we possess of combining apparent opposites in our minds'. Moreover, is it not possible perhaps to have—say—Anglicanism or Presbyterianism no less than Christianity 'in our very blood' (see letter to Miss Partridge, 26 Oct. 1893) and so, as it were, inherit dogmas and customs which to other people are presented as something external to be accepted or rejected as the case may be? Compare also his sympathetic attitude towards the 'justification of a Broad Church clergyman' in his letter to Miss Partridge, 19 April 1900; and in spite of further strictures on Jowett in his letter of 8 Oct. 1907, the *Groombridge Diary* (3 March 1911) would seem to suggest that he might have had other things to say about him at another time on another day.

intercourse, which saps our morals and will eventually, if not checked, ruin us. No religion is possible unless veracity lies at its base. The reason why the Bible is the book of books is simply that it is the most veracious of books. The chief duty of a clergyman is to exhibit an ideal standard of veracity. His noblest office is to rebuke the mean evasions and falsehoods around him. By such rebuke he will do infinitely more good than by ceremonies, theology or theosophy. Suppose he fails in this duty, suppose that it is notorious to every farmer and labourer and little tradesman in his parish that he has deliberately affixed his signature to that which he denies, what will the effect be? They will be encouraged to hope at the next assizes, if perjury should be profitable to them, that kissing the book and swearing the thing which is not, is not much worse at any rate than the parson's solemn declaration. You must have felt yourself when tempted how dangerous the example is of a superior person who has yielded.

Grant, for a moment, that the man who refuses for conscience' sake to sign is the victim of over-tender scrupulousness, he nevertheless does good, for that is not the way we lean and the bias is enormously weighted on the other side. The mischief done by exaggerated sensitiveness—if any mischief is ever done—is minute compared with the evil wrought by indifference. But there is another

argument. It is sometimes imagined that the discovery of truth is a logical process. Logic is the instrument, but unless it be used by an incorrupt intent, it is useless and even pernicious. If I find a doctrine to be true but unpalatable, and endeavour to reason myself out of it, I fatally injure my capacity for apprehending truth. The next time I encounter a truth it will be easy to evade it or I may even be able to affirm it to be a heresy, and at last I shall be deprived of the capacity—damned literally, I then am—to recognize truth when I see it. ‘*He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart, and be converted and I should heal them.*’ The same consequence follows if I do not *act* the truth revealed to me. I do not say that in every company and at all times I am bound unchallenged to proclaim my convictions, but I do say that if I believe a statement to be false I ought to let people know I believe it to be false when it is discussed. On the formal subscription to a letter nothing turns. Everything turns upon the acceptance or non-acceptance of the 39 Articles. If I do not accept them, I cannot as a clergyman simply ignore them. They stand in my way; they are an idolatrous representation of the God of this Universe, and I am commanded by the divinest of authorities to protest against them. Conceive, if you can, the prophet Elijah signing ‘as a pure

convention' the 39 Articles of Baal in order that he might secure a platform from which to preach Jehovah to Baal's worshippers! The results which it may be predicted will follow from trifling with the sacred message actually have followed in many cases which I could cite. In the recently published letters of Coleridge you will find some whose abject orthodoxy is shocking. He was no hypocrite in the vulgar sense of the word, but in the latter part of his life he had brought himself into such a condition that he could not only reason in favour of any theological dogma, but was not aware that he had not the fullest faith in it. This condition was only partially due to opium. His judgement on non-theological matters remained unimpaired. He brought himself to this pass by not following where he was led, by arguing himself into what he desired and by non-recognition of the obligation *to deny the contrary* of what he had proved and accepted as a fact. I consider that the state of mind in which Coleridge was in those later years to have been far more hopeless than that of the common liar.

These clerical sophisms are due to Oxford and education. All good things bring evil: Oxford and education are good, but they also bring evil in the corruption of our instincts. Let a candidate for holy orders, who wavers when he is asked to testify to that which is no longer a reality to him, consult any simple woman or even a child. Let

him expel all conjectures as to what Maurice, Kingsley or, far worse, what Jowett would have advised. Jowett, by the way, is to me the representative of modern Infidelity.

You will pardon me, perhaps, a self-reference. More than forty years ago the whole course of my life was changed by my refusal to slur over a difference between myself and my teacher on the subject of the inspiration of the Bible. I might easily have told him 'You and I mean really the same thing', or used some other current phrase contrived in order to stifle conscience. I might have succeeded in being content with a *mush* of lies and truth, a compound more poisonous than lies unmixed, but I was enabled to resist. I have never regretted the decision then taken. I can see now that if I had yielded I should have been lost for ever.

8.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

1 December 1897.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

This letter won't go off to-day, but I must make a beginning. I can't hold it all in, even for 24 hours.

When your friend has finished his depreciation, the first thing you have to do is to get up, threaten him with your umbrella, and call him a — ass. You cannot possibly proceed with a coherent

argument unless you discharge yourself of your wrath.¹ In fact I believe it would be a good plan in all controversies to begin by three minutes' cursing, clearing it away at the outset.

I should then continue my reply as follows, but do please bear in mind that I suggest only, and with the utmost diffidence. I am really one of the humblest creatures living: nobody but myself knows how humble I am.

The cultured folk depreciate Tennyson because he is popular and can be understood. They shatter their brains over *Sordello*, and feeling very superior, after *not* comprehending it, they despise a poet who does not propound puzzles and does not torture his mother-tongue.

.
Tennyson is a perfect artist, a master of metrical form. He aimed at being an artist, and thought that to achieve this aim it was worth while to take infinite pains. He held that the simplest subject might by art be made great, that a woman's hair might be described in such a way that the description should be immortal. But art goes for little or nothing now. If Horace were to return to the earth and were to send an ode to the *Daily Chronicle* it would be rejected as drivel. Nothing in these

¹ I supposed that this letter referred to some Debate in which Miss Partridge had to support Tennyson versus Browning; but Miss Partridge wrote to me, 'No, I didn't stand up for Tennyson. I preferred B., but didn't speak on either.'

days is acceptable but raging passion or the expression of a scepticism which is supposed to be quite original but is as old as man and has been expounded once for all—quite enough—in Job and Ecclesiastes. The moral effect of art and form such as Tennyson's is not recognized. We admire them, but if they *possess* us they have consequences which are far-reaching—even to the very depths. A line is passed round tragic emotion, otherwise shapeless ; it is curbed by beauty.

.

No poet has been more completely capable than Tennyson of translating beauty into words, but he does not laboriously seek after them and consequently they are always natural. You find no forced combinations in him.

The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn.

Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder : from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

The ' Orphic Chants ' of Miss Bellows, although I have not seen them, may, I have no doubt, depict intensely the struggles of a Promethean

soul bound to an uncongenial husband and tormented by the problem of the destiny of the Universe, but for myself I am afraid that after reading her Orphic strains I should prefer Aphrodite's rounded form, the shadows of the vine-bunches and the glowing sunlights which floated on her limbs. Nor in so doing am I guilty of mere luxurious dilettantism. Consider what is done for you when the vapour on a hill side is pictured as nobody but Tennyson, so far as I am aware, can picture it. From being a mere half-noticed blur it becomes a living thing. Its essence is vocal. The reason why the great shows of the world, sun, stars, sea, receive such casual notice and make so slight an impression is partly to be found in deficient sensation, partly in lack of attention, but mainly perhaps in our inability to *speak* them. Do not I win something if, listening to the sea dashing against a Cornish cliff, I can say that I hear the waves

. . . climb and fall
 And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves
 Beneath the windy wall.

.

But I go further. If you want human emotion, Tennyson can give it you, deeper, truer than anything I can see in Byron or Shelley. I confess he did not desert his wife nor keep a harem, and this may be an additional explanation of the indifference of the educated classes to him. He

lived a respectable life externally, but, for my own part, I am rather drawn to people who are forced to lead respectable lives and must play their Romeo and Juliet or their Hamlet in a country parsonage or a 'gentleman's residence'.

Maud!!

For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendour, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip.

I remember well enough reading *Maud* on the very first Sunday after it came out in 1855. I was a fairly good judge of poetical representations of vernal ardour then, and on re-reading the poem now, the glow and flame into which it fanned me are not forgotten and in a measure revive.

For something darker look at *Lucretius*, a work of later years. It cannot be read aloud in company, and I should imagine it is hardly intelligible to a woman, but as a close transcription of an experience there is nothing outside the *Pilgrim's Progress* to be compared with it. Many a man has blessed A. T. for printing those daring verses, showing thereby that this temptation or disease was not strange to him; for he is not repeating a well-known story: it is all expanded from a mere hint in the life of the philosopher.

.

That Tennyson occasionally wandered into doubtful metaphysics I admit. He did so in the *In Memoriam*, but he would hardly have been human if he had been able to avoid them. He could not escape the penalty laid upon us all by the nineteenth century, and there is less of its influence in him than in nine-tenths of his contemporaries. The *In Memoriam* has suffered because it has been spouted by ecclesiastical persons who claim Tennyson as a believer in orthodox immortality, but he did not write the poem to prove that doctrine. He wrote it *in memoriam*, and it should be thus accepted.

.

One distinguishing mark of Tennyson's greatness is his originality. He was a new departure. Nothing like him had preceded him, although so many have imitated him. He owes but little to any English predecessor, and his indebtedness is to the great classical models, which is an indebtedness to Nature. I have often called him the English Virgil, and Virgil he is. He has all Virgil's dissatisfaction with commonplace characterization of that which he loves, all Virgil's command over language, all his tenderness, all his tempered piety, all his delicacy in the treatment of the old mythology, all his sadness at the absence of certainty, and, nevertheless, his self-arrest precisely at the point where definition would be dishonest.

I could go on much longer, but I must not.

I am afraid you will dismiss me with a dip, and having discovered 'what he is driving at' you will put me in the fire. I must excuse myself by the plea that I belong to the Tennyson-Carlyle-Ruskin epoch. When I was a boy, these men were the appointed channels through which the new life was poured into me, and not into me only but into all the more receptive of the young men of that day. I cannot believe, when I call to mind what Tennyson was to all of us then, that my estimation of him is a self-begotten illusion. Goethe somewhere says, I fancy it is to Eckermann, that the verdict on a man of mark which is most worth consideration is that passed on him by his intelligent youthful contemporaries.

Good-bye. I am thankful it does not fall to me to defend my friend and that the speech by his counsel will not be so stormy, incoherent and therefore inconclusive as mine inevitably would be. I would give a goodish bit to hear you. Do you admit reporters? With love.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

9.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.
30 December 1897.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

By this time you are, no doubt, tired of Tennyson. There are one or two points, however, in your letter of such general interest that I cannot

let them alone. I will be as brief as possible, and what I have to say shall take the form of notes on your text, which is partly, of course, a report of what you heard and not an expression of your own thought.

‘Beauty of arrangement is not sufficient in words.’ ‘We demand of our greatest poets that they should speak to our highest selves, should be Seers,’ &c.

In a sense—yes. A mere musical combination of words is not poetry. But—no—if it is meant that poetry should be abstractions in metre. The most remarkable poetry in the world is not abstract and conveys no *idea* strictly so called. Take Milton’s description of the marshalling of the rebel angels—‘anon they move,’ &c. ; it is a statement of no proposition : it is a vivid description of something worth seeing, and, indirectly, an incitement to endurance. We are stirred, but we are none the wiser.

The lines in *The Princess*:

Hope like a poisoning eagle burned¹
Above the unrisen morrow

are poetry of the highest order, but they affirm no general truth. The secret of their power, if we must be analytical, is that mysterious addition of intensity by comparison. Hope gains from the eagle, and the eagle gains from hope. Our perceptions have a tendency to become filmy and dull ;

¹ . . . and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns.

the poet renews, rejuvenates them, and in so doing fulfils his office.

Hence the classification of the three kinds of minds, and the assignation of 'traditional faith' to Tennyson, is beside the mark, except in so far as he himself sets himself up to be theologian or metaphysician. What Browning's 'message' is I do not understand. I never felt that Browning's philosophizing convinced me. It is often nothing but legerdemain.

'Tennyson expresses beautifully the average feeling of the average English citizen.' Well, so be it, but how much of what is superior is *certain*? I deny, by the way, most decidedly that A. T. voices the commonplace Churchgoer or Dissenter. If by 'average feeling' we understand that he has no answer to the eternal question and does not pretend to have any, but hopes, and trusts, and loves an analogy which looks helpful, then I agree, and I confess that I sympathize with him.

'Poet should always be on the side of Revolution.' As a matter of fact Revolution is the ruin of poetry. The Revolution of 1793 almost destroyed Shelley. All that is stimulated by it in him is weak, temporary, and cannot now be read. It is the 'Ode to the West Wind' and 'The Skylark' which will keep him alive.

As to the special case of *The Princess* I can only say that the love part is what attracts me. I am glad A. T. did not attempt a Girton epic.

'Fatal lines about the clergyman in the *May Queen*.' They are just what such a girl would say. She was a poor girl: was to be a May Queen. What word do girls in that position use? They do not say 'parson' or 'priest', but generally 'clergyman', as far as my experience in country places goes. It is a Shakespearean word.

Your own remark about a distant sorrow. True. The *In Memoriam* was not composed, I think, until nine years after Hallam's death.

'That is all very well, but who is to tell,' &c.¹ True also. Goethe did not mean a simple contemporary verdict, but that of the best young men. Tennyson *was* hailed by the best young men—Spedding, Carlyle, Sir H. Taylor, &c., &c.

Job and Ecclesiastes.² I was thinking then of book-writing and of the uselessness of *publishing* doubt. Publish your convictions, but not your doubts. Personally I find but few new doubts. I quite agree with you that it is impossible to refrain altogether from expressing them, although it is better both for ourselves and others to avoid much talk about them. I do not like to speak of my worst fears. If anybody could help me I would speak, but nobody can.

Ah! You are not conceited. The 'likes of you' can't be. People of your sort may be a trifle contemptuous now and then, but that is not conceit. A little intercourse with the immortals, or a look at

¹ See p. 170.

² See p. 166.

the stars on a clear night, is a tolerably sure antidote to thinking too much of yourself.

Thanks ever so much for your letter. Kindest regards.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

Appendix

What think [you] of this? To me it is about as pure and perfect [a] piece of poetic work as any I know, but I cannot say there is much of the Prophet or Seer in it.

He told Sesina, that the poor mad youth,
Soon after they arrived in that new world,
In spite of his dissuasion, seized a boat,
And all alone set sail by silent moonlight
Up a great river, great as any sea,
And ne'er was heard of more: but 'tis supposed,
He lived and died among the savage men.

Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, 1797.

10.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

4 April 1898.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I send you by post two papers by Tolstoy on Art. They will, at least, stir you up. Excuse the pencil notes—which were not meant for you. They belong to me and partly to my friend Webb, the architect, of whom, perhaps, you may have heard me speak. The second number is not scrawled so much as the first, mainly because of

more complete agreement. Webb has not yet taken a turn at it. The criticism on Wagner is unanswerable, I think; but *not* because *I* have been trying always to say the same thing and have always declared that the arm or leg of a Greek statue or a melody from *William Tell* or the *Magic Flute* was better art than setting metaphysical problems to music.

News I have not much to tell. The telescope is being dismantled and is going away, for the excavations have reached the observatory. I shall never put up another, and there is an end to *that*. But I do not encourage any sentimental moralizing, and I strive to mock myself by the serious reflection that in every day there is the last of something.

The sale of the telescope was partly intended as a preliminary to flitting, but as yet no house has been forthcoming. Do you understand that painful mental condition in which one eddies round and round instead of marching from premiss to conclusion and so to settlement and peace? I cannot imagine that you do. I always fancy that if you are in difficulty you can shut yourself up for a couple of hours, at the end of which you say, '*There*; that's done with', and that you are never weak enough to hark back. But as for your poor, unhappy servant, he has nine o'clock resolutions and twelve o'clock, and, worst of all, night resolutions (if such they can be called), and these recur every twenty-four hours.

I am now in treaty for an old manor-house, or hall, dirt-cheap because it is in the village of Appledore to which nobody goes, but the occupier does not seem inclined to turn out. There will be room in it, if I take it, for all the Partridge family, and when stocks and shares have reached the bottom, to which they are rapidly tending, you had better, every one of you, except your brother, who I suppose must be near London, determine to club with us. Can you milk cows? The aforesaid occupier, by the way, was a neighbour of yours, a real, live person of quality, the Dowager Countess of Lovelace. . . . I could live at Appledore for less than it costs me here, but then comes the eddy.

I hope you don't forget your own letters? Ah, yes, I have often thanked God it is not my lot to be a professional teacher, and the reason could not be expressed in better words than your own. It is surprising how much of what we, or at least I, hope, is based (I am talking of religion now) on what has no foundation which I can prove or exhibit. How then could I stand up and explain the way of salvation to people who must at all costs have simplicity and consistency? I told you I was reading the Bible, with the invaluable help of Kautsch's translation. I have now finished the Old Testament. Nothing for years has been so profitable to me, or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, has so quickened me. Association has much to do with this. Brought up on the Bible

as I was and as you were, its words are the accredited messengers of so much, which if it has been revealed to others, has not been revealed in that way, and lacks the peculiar authority and sacredness with which we invest it. If you ask me whether the O.T. is a religious book, I hardly know what to answer. In its absolute, terrible sincerity—yes: in the astonishing purity and nobility of the prophetic morality—yes: in the equally astonishing conception of a *one* God to whom justice and all that we call right are dear—yes. Chemosh, it is true, is acknowledged as the god of the Moabites; Jehovah's power does not extend beyond Palestine, but yet he is superior to all his rivals and he 'made the heavens'. This thought, for which we have to thank the Hebrews, that 'He who 'made the heavens' is just and demands justice between men; that He also demands the supremacy of the best in us and not the worst, is perhaps the greatest that ever entered the human brain. 'Seek him' (says Amos) 'that maketh the Pleiades and Orion.' Is not that magnificent? But the series of treatises which we bind together as the O.T. is certainly not religious in the sense that it contains any answer whatever to the questions which most disturb us modern folk. The immortality of the soul is not only not taught, but its necessity is not felt. The Psalmist cries:

I am a sojourner in the earth :
Hide not thy commandments from me.

Man desires to live according to God's law, although in a few years he will be with the dead who praise not God. No doubt the Jew believed that Jehovah rewarded obedience by temporal prosperity, but it is quite impossible to read the Bible fairly and assign temporal prosperity as the sole motive for piety. This attitude is completely strange and foreign to us, although in certain moods it is just this strangeness and foreignness, this Semitic remoteness from everything Greco-Christian which charms me. I open the Bible, and straightway I am in another world; in the desert, with desert dwellers, and with ideas which no more resemble those of the nineteenth century than the Hebrew characters resemble the type of a newspaper.

As to Shelley, he was one of the gods I worshipped when I was young. I read him now, but cannot say that the adoration remains.¹ I miss substance. Subtracting the wonderful art and the music, to what does it all come? The *Laon and Cythna*, one of his most ambitious efforts, is spoilt by the

¹ See the *Groombridge Diary*, 31 August 1910. I here copy also an extract from a letter to a friend written in 1875: 'By the way—talking about the Bible reminds me—for Shelley was such a lover of the Bible—did you ever read the *Shelley Memorials* or Browning's preface to his little volume of Shelley's letters or Hogg's *Shelley*? If not, you should do so. Every trace of Shelley is a microcosm. On every smallest word or act is an image small but perfect of his own grand soul. No genius like him for pressing all of himself into his commonest deed!'

Revolution, and the poems which please me best are those in which its influence is not apparent. Imagine Shelley in the Tudor time with no revolution in the air, and you will have a poet who would have written much less, but that less would have been of a more lasting quality:.....

There is one more paragraph in your letter on which I should have liked to say something, but you have had enough. Besides, the subject is sure to turn up when we see one another. I will, therefore, *at last* come to an end with the assurance that I am

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

Please don't bother yourself to write about the Tolstoy unless the spirit moves you to write as a pleasure. Nothing is more hateful than being obliged to say something when you want to say nothing. . . . To-morrow (but this is between you and me) I am summoned to a meeting of a friend's creditors. I lose about £200, not much you will say, but all of it was saved in sixpences, and Molly will be £200 poorer.

II.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

3 July 1898.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

I sent you the last part of the Tolstoy a day or two ago. I give up the Wagner argument, for

my acquaintance with him does not include the *Lied* on which, it seems, his fame mainly rests. But, so far as I know him—a parting shot—I say his music is not art, but a preachment, in tones, of very doubtful metaphysics, and that there is more art, and infinitely more beauty and genius, in Mozart's *Magic Flute* or in Rossini's *William Tell* than in all the operas of Wagner I have heard.

I went to see Mrs. Lewes a little while ago, sat at the desk where George Eliot wrote her books, and read many of her letters (unpublished) to her step-children, delightfully affectionate and even playful, but the light that lay upon them was uniformly toned and reduced to a kind of sunset tint, such as that I see now upon the grassy hill opposite to me. They were very pathetic to me, and, reviving my old passion for the woman, they made me begin to read her all over again. I shall go on till I have finished her, provided I can get through, but occasionally I desist and doubt if it is good to persevere. So much of her became familiar to me under conditions long past, and I am threatened with a resurrection of what is better buried. I am glad to find that my feeling towards her has lost none of its intensity, and that, as a whole, what I thought of her five-and-thirty years ago is what I think of her now. There are submarine caves which she has sounded, into which no plummet but hers has been dropped. I do not say that others have not gone as deep, or perhaps

deeper, but the bottom of the ocean is vast, and she ranks as a first explorer. For example, there is that passage in the *Mill on the Floss* where Maggie studies Thomas à Kempis and fancies she has found a clue which will extricate her from her perplexities; but presently Philip shows the other side of the shield, and the poor child is brought face to face with that difficulty of difficulties, the opposition of apparently conflicting principles, each of which, considered by itself, is unimpeachable. Thomas à Kempis is true, but so are the senses.

I have been living the idlest life since you were here. A dread of all *beginnings* has taken possession of me. I was asked for something, some bit of writing, and furbished up a paper¹ which I wrote a little while ago with a web of truth and woof of fiction, professing to describe what a man goes through when he leaves off work, but a woman-critic to whom it was submitted thought it bosh, and I unfeignedly admit that she is probably right. . . .

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

¹ This, of course, must be 'Mr. Whittaker's Retirement'. I remember after reading it in proof for *More Pages from a Journal* going to him full of enthusiasm, and I think he was very much pleased. He then told me of the 'woman-critic' and said that he had nearly thrown it aside. This story has since been included in *Selected English Short Stories First Series* (The World's Classics).

12.¹

C/o Miss Sellick,
Alfoxden Cottage,
Holford, Bridgwater.
14 May 1899.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

I ought to have answered your letter about Mabel long ago. Apart altogether from its guidance, it was most interesting to me as a study of character, showing how much fuller, richer, and

¹ This letter enables us to trace his movements in the Quantocks, which is not possible from the Quantock notes in *More Pages*;—‘his happiest holiday’—(see *Groombridge Diary*, p. 37).

In July 1914, on a visit to Holford, I called at Miss Sellick's. Though she evidently had had no idea in 1899 that any special interest attached to the gentleman who was staying with her, and probably had had no call to think of him since, a very few words brought him back with extraordinary vividness. Fifteen years fell right away. She said she believed she had letters from him still in her drawer, ‘cards,’ she was careful to explain, and I knew of course, that these would be the correspondence cards which he was fond of using for business purposes. I had not at that time seen this letter to Miss Partridge giving the name and address, but there was no doubt now about having found the right cottage, for not only were these letters ‘cards’, but they betrayed anxieties about the journey, whether he must spend the night ‘in town’—‘in town’, which she thought meant London, though it turned out to mean Bridgwater—and then the special loaves they had sent down from home, and a special sort of flour, and how ‘Miss White’ made bread. Finally, the names were unearthed from an old visitors’ book, but written there by Miss Sellick herself. He had been much interested because her mother (I think) had known Tom Poole; there was, at any rate, some link in her with Wordsworth-Coleridge days.

deeper such studies become when the person we study is known to us as intimately as you know Mabel, and suggesting the necessary falseness and flatness of them when the knowledge is less. I have not heard from her since she was settled at Rugby, but I hope the place suits her. She attracts me more and more every time I see her, for I discover more and more in her—the contents are larger. Whether I admire her for what she is conscious of possessing is another matter. As a rule I find that what is most precious to me in my friends is just that of which they are unconscious or that on which they set no store.

Molly and I left home to escape house-cleaning and came here, partly to see the Quantocks, and partly to see the birth-place of so many of the *Lyrical Ballads*. It was a pilgrimage I have long purposed. We are about 600 feet up the hills, in complete solitude. A mere track, not a road, leads to the cottage, and behind us are the moors rising to between 1,200 and 1,300 feet, but as we are so near the sea they seem much higher. Deep coombs run through them, each with its little beck. The lanes in the lowlands are the true west-country lanes smothered in foliage and flowers. Within a short distance is the shrine, the house in which Dorothy and her brother lived, which Coleridge so often visited, and three miles away is Nether Stowey. Every path in Dorothy's Journal can be traced, and the Ancient Mariner hove in sight hard

by when the immortal Three set out on that memorable November walk to Linton. It is very affecting, but my emotions or thoughts—properly a kind of thought-feeling—are of the inarticulate kind. The silence of the place strikes me. I have never before known, that is to say for any length of time, what pure silence is. The birds certainly, and especially the cuckoo, sing incessantly, but they do not interrupt the quietude. They rather add to it.

Molly goes to Oxford on the 24th, but I shall stay a little longer as I am so fascinated. Our rooms here are wanted for Whitsuntide and we shift, therefore, next Friday to :

C/o Mrs. Parsons, Bicknoller, Taunton ;
about three miles from Alfoxden over the moors. Thence I hope to take a day's journey to Cleve Abbey. Yesterday we walked to East Quantocks' Head, where the Luttrells have lived for 300 years or more. There is a canopied tomb for one of them in the church. Their house, a large, gray, straggling Elizabethan building, very lovely, abuts on the churchyard. Inside the church is beautiful wood-carving *and*—close to the canopied tomb, under the shadow of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century architecture, with the purple hills on the horizon, the parson has stuck the gaudiest of altars with maroon cotton velvet curtains, ordered probably from the catalogue of the ecclesiastical furnishers and tailors in Southampton Street. So much for

May 1899

185

the converting power of beauty ! But I do believe that no religion from that of Ashtoreth to that of Mormon has ever had a *sillier* and obtuser priesthood than ours.

I went to see Swinburne—at last—but I must tell you about him another day. Molly sends her best love.

Yours always,

W. HALE WHITE.

13.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

9 July 1899.

MY DEAR MABEL,

I am writing now just to assure you—as I ought not any longer to delay—that my silence has not been due to lack of affectionate sympathy but simply to inability to say anything but what would have been quite futile.

I am exceedingly sorry that you can make no promise to come to Herstmonceux. I want you to come, and there is the additional disappointment of a—perhaps groundless—confidence that you would come.

I cannot talk to you this morning. I am not busy : if I were, I would not tell you ; for in correspondence with any one whom I hold dear *that* is an excuse I never make. I am dumb. Perhaps the reason is that last night I was in an evil mood. It was Saturday, and we had what is said to be the worst excursion of the season—

B——'s girls. The town was horrible, and the noise even up here was so bad that we were obliged to shut the windows. Hastings does upset me when it is given over to this riot. Then we have now three new dogs near us who bark incessantly. The 'cry of Hell-hounds' which

. . . never-ceasing bark'd
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud and rung
A hideous peal.

could not have been more diabolical.

The line you unconsciously quoted at Fairlight was not from the *Gardener's Daughter*. I forget now what it was.

Don't reply yet. I would rather you did not until you are able to tell us definitively what your plans are.

Your most affectionate friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

14.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

8 October 1899.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

That beautiful photograph from Botticelli greatly interested me, but also greatly puzzled me. At last, through the help of a gentleman who is preparing a great work on Botticelli, we were enabled to decipher it.

The picture follows a description by Lucian of a lost work of Apelles. The naked figure to the

extreme left is Truth, arriving late. Next to her is Repentance in rags. The young man on the ground is he who is calumniated. The young woman with the torch (which increases as she goes), beautiful to look at but 'troppo astuta,' is Calumny. She is being tricked out by Treachery and Fraud, and the male figure is Envy her guide. The judge is Midas, into whose ass's ears Ignorance and Suspicion are whispering. It is a wonderful invention. All the despicable creatures are handsome and even lovely. Botticelli must have considered calumny to be a much more heinous crime than we in these latter days imagine it to be.

I will take to heart what you say about the Browning Letters, and if I get an opportunity will look at them again. A woman's instinct in such matters is so much surer than a man's that I have no doubt you are right. Very likely my inability to read the Letters is due to a fading interest in B. He has not lasted with me. He plays tricks with his intellect. He also expatiates enormously. I often look at that long shelf, *Inn Album*, *Pacchiarotto*, *Parleyings*, *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country*, &c., &c., and ask myself to what it all comes and whether a line of it will live.

As to the other subject of unfinished debate, the Falstaff, I am more than ever convinced that I am right. A woman here is more likely to go wrong than a man, because she will be in greater danger of taking a simple view of Falstaff's sins. Hazlitt,

whose criticism on *Henry IV* is very good, observes that we do not see much, if anything, of Falstaff actually eating and drinking. He loves to talk of his tavern exploits and others still less creditable, but he turns them into a sort of poetry. He romances over them. He never for an instant excites disgust and is never vulgar. His absurdity, like that of Malvolio, is a natural wholesome product of the earth, smelling of the earth, it is true, but genuine. There is room for absurdity of this kind. It is as legitimate as virtue, and the world without it would be much more unpleasant than it is.

Agnes and Cecily (my granddaughter) are here. They will not go to Spain for some time. Cecily is a most attractive child, beautiful and sharp-witted. . . . They are going back to London with Molly on Tuesday if she is better. At present she has a bad sore throat and cold. . . . She and I think of going away again for a few weeks soon, for I am horribly restless. The difficulty is to know what to do with servants and house, for I cannot afford to pay any more board wages. I have offered the house rent free to several people on the condition that they will pay the servants their wages and keep them, but nobody will accept.

I have just finished the revision of Wordsworth's biography by Leslie Stephen for the *Dictionary N.B.* It is accurate, but as dry as Ezekiel's dry bones, and the spirit of the Lord Himself could not quicken it. It has given rise to much reflexion in

me on the 'literary man' such as L. S. is and his office in this world, on the value of what is called 'literature' and on some consequences of its enormous manufacture. However, I will not trouble you with my thoughts thereon, which were not cheerful. One remark I will make, that it is disheartening to find people everlastingly discussing a subject as if it had never been discussed before, when really it has not only been discussed but settled, discussion and settlement being buried and unknown because no human industry is adequate to the search after them. It is so much easier to begin all over again out of your own head than to make even the least effort to discover what has been done before. When I took up Hazlitt to see what he had to say about Falstaff, I lighted on a little paper on the advantages of learning Latin and Greek which makes superfluous nine-tenths of what is heard upon that matter with such iteration now, but how many of those who debate the subject know that Hazlitt has ever written a line upon education?

Good-bye. Must stop sometime.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

Ezekiel is most interesting. I have just read him again during my triennial passage through the Bible. Strange to see that combination of the *writer* and the prophet, the writer's art, one may almost say artifices, and yet such white-hot

passionate earnestness. Give my love to Mabel. I have not heard from her for an age.

15.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

9 October 1899.

MY DEAR MABEL,

There was one passage in your letter of the 17th July 1898 which I did not understand. You say 'when you consider how much heredity has thrown in my way'. I do not know what failings you imagine have been transmitted to you by your parents, but of this I am certain, that if there is anything of importance in yourself which belongs to them you owe them a great debt of gratitude. Your bodily ailments, serious as they are and a hindrance in so many ways, are, I suppose, not an inheritance. I would gladly accept them if, with them, I could take over your courage and your mental temperament. But I am persuaded that in the case of man, with his infinitely complex organization, heredity does not count for much, if we mean by it the communication to the child of definite, unmodified peculiarities which exist in the father or mother. One lightest touch is able totally to transform a strongly marked tendency and to turn a vice into a virtue or a virtue into a vice. To think much of the power of heredity over ourselves, to encourage fatalism in the face of temptation or despair, is suicide.

I altogether am at one with you in the attitude, explained in that letter and in the one following, towards those questions which everybody nowadays supposes it necessary that he must solve. The passion for definite statement, like the passion of men for women and women for men, is no doubt implanted in us for a good reason, but what fearful mischief does not the one as well as the other breed! We carry our desire for logical completeness into a region where no logical completeness is possible, and shape out of the void all kinds of illusory phantoms. Very few persons indeed, very few women especially, with an intellect as keen as yours, are able to go as far as you have gone and stop where you have stopped. No word of caution to you now is required, because you have come to your full height and are not likely to go astray. I wholly agree with you also that the precision which is considered to be indispensable in view not only of life but more particularly of death is useless. There is no steel in that breastplate, and the arrow will pierce it as if it were paper.

I should like to hear something of you. I have nothing of any consequence to report of myself. I sit up here and read books, and wonder whether they are worth the trouble bestowed upon them. Idea jostles idea, but it would be better if I could do a day's honest work in making somebody happier. I cannot change now: I am too old.

If I had my life over again I would alter all this and much besides. I wonder how much of my past existence would be left !

Molly and I propose wandering again in a few weeks—whither I cannot say. Something will depend upon our chance of letting or lending our house. . . . Write to me soon. The point and straight line had better wait till we meet at Christmas.

Good-bye, my dear child.

Yours very affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

16.

3 November 1899.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

I grieve to hear that you are not sufficiently decided about this shocking war. As for myself the wickedness of it makes me burn as I lie awake—such a justification of all the worst accusations ever brought against this country. Was there ever a war for such a cause ? Granted all that is pleaded on behalf of the Uitlanders and their franchises, is it our duty to march about the world redressing such grievances ? If Mr. Chamberlain wants a grievance and has any superfluous courage, let him attack the brewers at home. There is not a vested interest here which is not impugnable. A more cowardly Government than this Government never existed, and it *therefore* bullies the Boers.

. . . Pray stir up everybody who has a conscience

November 1899

193

to protestation. Don't let Mabel swerve. Excuse my earnestness. All art, literature, seem to me a mockery now—mere trifling.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

17.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.
25 December 1899.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

My sincere thanks for the gift and note, both of which I shall preserve. I spent one evening almost alone with Mazzini. He was living then under a feigned name in very humble lodgings in Brompton. He had much of the saint in him, and consequently it was difficult, for me at least, completely to sympathize with him. Imperfection of sympathy, however, did not prevent an admiration, almost enthusiastic, for him, especially for his sublime courage and for his faith in certain Ideals to which he gave the name of God. In his purity and simplicity of worship he was altogether un-English, admitting no compromises, a true believer in the celestial Kingdom of the New Testament. He was not a failure, although Italy is not yet a regenerate republic. Such as he are the salt of the earth, and the more impracticable they are, the more do they sweeten and preserve it. Carlyle understood him much better than Mrs. Carlyle understood him, but Carlyle had no hope of the people and he was right. Ultimately, no doubt, the

people will save themselves, but not yet, and at present self-rule, as our own country shows, is a failure. The House of Commons was never so inaccessible to virtue without wealth as it is now. The presence of working-men members is no argument to prove the contrary, for they are there merely as delegates of organizations. I think I have told you before that if you really desire to know Carlyle and his wife you must read Norton's edition of the *Reminiscences* and *Letters*. By reading them you will also learn much of Froude.

I did not see the *Soul of a People*.¹ I heard about it and meant to look at it, but alas, it is almost useless for me to take up new subjects now. I go over the old books, the Bible, Bacon, Shakespeare and Milton again and again because—partly because at least—I have got into their ways and can derive more profit from them than from anything else. I have become tuned to them and respond to them: the new, not because it is not good, but because it is foreign, does not take root and is forgotten to-morrow. Anything fresh upon my favourite subjects of course interests me. Thus, for example, I have been much delighted with Kenyon's *Bible and the Manuscripts*. Kenyon is

¹ By Fielding Hall. A book, it seems, which one *ought* to have read, dealing with Buddhism and the Burmese. I found it in my Mother's list of books for 1901, and again a few years later marked as 'very interesting', while oddly enough in the same list for 1901 appears *Pages from a Journal, Mark Rutherford*, with a distinguishing cross.

in the British Museum, and knows what he is saying.

I am looking out for you next week. It has not been a cheerful time lately with me. The war weighs on me like the disgrace of a brother or sister. A day of humiliation! for *us* too who have been mocking the Boers for their prayers and psalm-singing.

. . . We take great care of Mabel. She needs it. She actually proposed to go down the hill to church this morning and to walk back! I stopped her.

Ever faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

18.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

3 February 1900.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

Thank you most sincerely for the cap. It is a perfect fit and the colour is too good for darkness. Warmer thanks still for your kindness in making it. I wish you had put your name in it just as you would in a book. Not that there is any danger that it will be sold, although just now I have been clearing out and sending parcels and packages to salesmen and auctioneers. The telescope, observatory and heaps of books have gone. But as I have never sold in my life anything from a human being for whom I cared, and my memory is uncommonly good for gifts—of all sorts—which are genuine, it is certain that, barring

fire and theft, your cap will remain as a part of what are called the 'effects of the deceased'.

. . . Molly is very well. As to myself I have had a return of an internal disorder from which I suffered much ten or twelve years ago. I then went to two or three doctors, but none of them could tell what was the matter with me. . . . Anyhow, the results are much trouble of body and mind, and day-mares which are worse than those at night.

I won't write any more now, but will wait till I am a little happier.

Faithfully and with gratitude yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

19.¹

The irony in the *Vicar of Wakefield* is not so much of particular individuals or of a particular class, but of human nature and circumstances, and is largely unconscious.

As to human nature, it is the irony of sympathetic tolerance for human weakness and a love of it. As to circumstances, it is the irony of the little human drama played here below, an irony so tempered that it is a pleasant relief to those serious thoughts in which we make too much of life and death.

¹ Miss Partridge dates this 'Hastings, 7 March 1900'. It is a scrap evidently torn off a sheet.

20.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

19 April 1900.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

I answer your letter with some promptitude because of the reference to Seaford. We have to clear out in the week preceding the 8th of May. Consequently, when you are just settling at Seaford we shall be in the thick of our much-dreaded trouble. But I do not see why you should not go home by way of Crowborough. If you look at the railway map you will find that from Lewes to Croydon or London Bridge through Crowborough is nearly as direct as the ordinary road through Redhill. If we have no beds you could come in the morning and leave in the afternoon. I would give much to have a word of advice from you on one or two points, specially as to the ragged field which surrounds us. We have secured a naval pensioner and his wife. The man is not likely to understand more about gardening than I understand, which is nothing.

. . . Louis Paul is dead. He died in the Canary islands. Rose¹ will feel it deeply, and so will Mrs. Rendel. I have had two or three letters lately from Rose about *Sunningwell*, a remarkable book written by her godfather, Mr. Cornish, Vice-Provost of Eton, now an old man. He began it as a picture of a friend, but ended by making it a picture of

¹ Miss Rose Paul.

himself. It is a delineation of Church Society in a cathedral town and, in the principal figure, a justification of a Broad Church clergyman, who strives to be honest and *is* honest and nevertheless remains in the Establishment. It is pleasant to read Mr. Cornish's scholarly English, and *Sunningwell* has higher merits than those of style. The position of the hero is not mine, but nevertheless inconsistency is not the measure of insincerity. After all, the real question is how much truth has a man got. He may not accept the inevitable inference from what he admits, and he may thereby expose himself to the charge of intellectual or even moral dishonesty, but if he has acquired more beliefs than his neighbour who judges him, more beliefs which are facts, he is a better man than his neighbour. The really insincere person is the person who is indifferent to what ought to be of the highest importance to him.

You must read *Sunningwell*. I don't quite know, though, my reason for telling you to read this or that. Latterly I have felt literature to be little better than an idle luxury, not much above other luxuries. I ask myself the question 'What good are you?', and my conscience tells me that I should be more virtuous in relieving the least bit of misery than in discovering and propounding—had I the brains to do so—a new theory of Hamlet.

. . . Leonard comes here for a week to-day, and Ernest, who has spent Easter with us, departs for

Rugby. He has been unwell, and looks much pulled down. On inquiry we find he has been starving himself, partly because he fancies he can work better on a spare diet, but mainly, so Molly and I believe, in order to save his landlady trouble. Her one object seems to be to save herself in cooking and not to burn coals. Hence cold bits, everlasting skim-milk puddings, nothing hot for lunch, and cold bacon always for breakfast. I have made him promise to move. . . .

With love from us both,

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

21.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.

22 April 1900.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

. . . I have just this moment had a letter from the wife of a man¹ whom I have known intimately since the year 1849. He has been very ill with pneumonia, and now lies and has lain for some weeks expecting death. He is perfectly calm, and talks about his books and people just as he has always talked. The marriage, for his wife is a most intelligent, affectionate woman, has been completely happy, but somehow there is no distress—nothing but peace. He has never been, at least not for fifty years, a Christian in the ordinary sense

¹ This, of course, must be Mr. Colenutt.

of the word, but he is as fearless as if he were just about to lie down for an afternoon slumber. It is not that he has had any struggle which philosophy has enabled him to overcome : his attitude is that of simple nature. Such as he, I believe, we might all be, or, at any rate, we should stand a chance of being, if the priests had not poisoned our blood, and inoculated us with artificial terrors. . . .

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

22.

C/o Mrs. Green, Stoneleigh,
Crowborough Cross,
Tunbridge Wells.

8 May 1900.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

There is a pause of a day. The furniture is on the road and we are in lodgings. I take the opportunity of returning Emma's letter as you may want it. The attraction your sister has for me is singular, because I really have not seen much of her. I have been trying to think how I could express to myself in words what she is to me, for what she stands, but I cannot. She evades definition, or even the roughest description. There is in her, in this letter for example, a curious union of much meaning, of depth and breadth, with a certain difficulty of articulation. I have never known a woman who seems to me to have looked more

stedfastly or more seriously on the heavens and earth, and yet she finds it hard to say what she sees. Nevertheless at times, by force of simple sincerity, she excels in lucidity. What a creature for a like-minded man to love! With what devotion, with what passion would he not take her as a wife!

I cannot say, with Landor, that the realities of life are the things which are *not* real to me. They have been very real to me during the chaos of removal, but last Sunday morning, having got my books (which preceded the rest of my goods) into order, I spent some hours alone in perfect silence in the empty new house. Did you ever try that experiment? It is not particularly wholesome. I began reflecting on the other houses in which I have lived, from the one in the High Street, Bedford, in which I was born, and then on all the many 'might-have-beens' which look as if they ought to have been, things just missed, which, if obtained, would have made such a difference! It is odd that such sentimentality should overtake us at times. I believe men are more liable to it than women. At last I was obliged to shake myself and move out of doors.

You will find *Sunningwell* repay careful reading. I quite agree with you that ecclesiastical society, even of the best kind, would impede the movement of my limbs, and that if it were of the common kind [it] would be insupportable; but nevertheless the problems which presented themselves to More

were genuine and not manufactured. That is the whole question, the one question to be asked—are your difficulties human or artificial? Whether you have solved them or not is not of so much moment to me, inquiring whether you are a person with whom I wish to walk and talk.

. . . With love.

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

I expect Molly from Hastings this afternoon. I hope the furniture will come to-morrow. If it does, our address after to-morrow will be

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

23.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

24 July 1900.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

What you said when you were here about Judas Iscariot seemed to me so characteristic of you that I have tried to recall it and I send you my notes. My memory is bad, very bad, but I do not think I have misrepresented you on any important point. Please send the papers¹ back to me, as I have no

¹ Miss Partridge told me that 'the papers' were a printed proof of the article which appeared in *Pages from a Journal*, 1900. She declared that it was 'pure fiction' that the proof was her share in any talk they had on that subject. 'I wrote

copy. I wish Mabel could have heard you, as I believe she would have agreed with you. Most likely, however, you have expressed yourself to her as you did to me.

Your delightful letter was very welcome. You can go back to the fountain-pen. It evidently suits you better than quill or steel. You have a happy tendency to make people contented with their lot. Having been to Crowborough and beheld the raw newness of the place and my hatred of it, you console me by the reminder that 'here we have no continuing city'. True! true also is the end of the verse, so far as I am concerned, for all my life I have been 'seeking one to come'. I shall not now find it on this side of the skies. I should have loved it. The sense of fleeting is always present with me, and I clutch at anything which seems to embody permanence. . . .

No, my dear friend, at my time of life the imagination is quite incapable of creating anything new. It occupies itself entirely in repainting the work of earlier years. Sometimes you are surprised by what you fancy to be a new emotion, a new glory in the heavens, or a new light on the fields; but it is the old emotion, the old glory, the old light, and you recollect that you have repeated a dozen times all you have to say about them. You read a fresh author who must have some fresh

back and said I often didn't remember what I had *not* said, especially when I liked having the credit of wise sayings!

truths to tell you, but you run them into old moulds, and if you try to impart them to others you do not impart what has just been under your eyes but something long ago familiar to you which your new book has simply re-awakened.

I wish you had been here a few days ago when General de Gorlof and his wife came over from Tunbridge Wells. You have heard me speak of them. They used to live at Penshurst. He is a Russian, and was in the Russian diplomatic service after he left the army. It is always interesting to listen to what a foreigner with some intelligence has to say about us. The most detached Englishman can never see with the utmost stretch of disengaging strength his own absurdities and failings. Madame de Gorlof was a Miss Greatorex, a friend of George Eliot. She is a cultivated woman, and she possesses that delicacy, simplicity and those perfect manners which you now and then find in well-bred women and [which] are real genius, fascinating in the extreme, at least to a man. She is getting on in years now and has been very ill—has, in fact, looked Death straight in the face, preserving her composure when he stood quite close and beckoned to her.

Mrs. Eagle is still in bed, and we are bemuddled. — came to see her, but he was no good, and the second doctor is not much better. The disease is called erythema, but what it *is* is another matter. I hope Molly will not knock herself up. The hot

weather is against her. Our Hastings Lizzie, unfortunately for us, has got another situation. Otherwise I would have had her here.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

24.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.
September 1900.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

I have been reading carefully Mabel's book and have counselled her to put it aside for twelve months and then re-write it. I am afraid she is disappointed, but I could not honestly give any other advice. It has been done in a hurry, and her matter is much too good to be spoilt by a little impatience. It requires re-arrangement, form, and a little more severity of style. It might also with advantage be much fattened.

Every time I see her I am struck with the singular qualities of her mind. For acuteness and velocity of operation I never saw its like. Carlyle said that when a woman's intellect is quick it is quicker than any man's. This is true. Her penetration and rapidity are, of course, not without their drawbacks. She reads too fast, and, in all she does, reaches forward too impetuously.

She is going to London on Monday and, unless you stop her, will do twice as much as will be sufficient to knock her up. Her list of engagements

is heartbreaking. There is one of her habits which ought to be reformed at once, that is to say, her letter-writing. I have talked to her about it, but she laughs at me. I am certain that this perpetual *expression* is most demoralizing.¹ It is like constant bleeding. Consider, too, the time it takes, time which might be spent on the best books. She works hard, and has little leisure, and the well cannot possibly stand all this pumping. She may pump, but does the pump suck? If she had nothing to do I should not complain.

I am very sorry her holiday is at [an] end, and wish she could stay longer. I grow fonder of her and don't want her to go. I am afraid she finds the place dull. We may have some virtues, but we are *dull*, or 'doll' as one of our servants used to say. Physical reasons account for this dullness or dollity of all our brood. There is another reason, by the way, why I think Mabel should not write so many

¹ On this sheet Miss Partridge has written 'In the character of Mark Rutherford he says :

"I found that expression reacts on him who expresses and intensifies what is expressed. If we break out into rhetoric over a toothache the pangs are not the easier but the worse to be borne."

'Surely this differs with different temperaments—with some, expression brings relief: It seems possible for them to cast the burden on another by mere expression, and to relieve themselves of much of its weight. With *him* I think much of *his* suffering would be dissolved and dissipated by expression, and yet for myself I feel as if expression' Here the sheet ends.

letters. The stooping and excitement must be bad for her heart. I noticed yesterday that a morning with her pen was followed by one of her attacks. She was obliged to go to bed early and could not get up to breakfast. She brings down a kind of parcel in a strap, full of notepaper and envelopes. On this she may have been toiling in bed for aught I know. At about ten the parcel is unstrapped, and then she begins and goes on for two or three hours. Very often the process is recommenced in the afternoon.

Excuse pencil. The arm that had neuritis will not sometimes allow me to use a pen with any freedom, and a prolonged attack of my old, wearisome troubles has made me shaky.

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

25.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

1 November 1900.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

. . . I must tell you a story. Perhaps you have heard it. When Max Müller was a candidate for the Boden Professorship of Sanscrit he was violently opposed because of his so-called German theology and his Liberalism, although it was admitted that he was, philologically, the best man for the place. He was defeated, and a member of

Convocation was heard to say ' I am an Englishman, and I hate your damned intellect '.

I went into a labourer's cottage to-day and saw on the wall a large framed, coloured picture called ' The Broad and the Narrow Way '. The Broad Way, of course, went through a palatial arch past a gambling shop, a public-house and other sinful attractions, and was thronged with gay people a-foot and in carriages.

The Narrow Way entered a very humble porch and climbed a steep hill flanked by a school and a church till it came near the Celestial City. Just under the rock on which the City was placed was a big brick building with the inscription ' Deaconess's Home ' on it. The allegory was rather muddled, but I admired the genius of the advertiser. Within full view of the windows of the Home were the flames of Hell across the valley with which the good deaconesses could delight themselves.

. . . Molly comes back next week. I am much depressed without her.

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

26.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

10 April 1901.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

. . . I am certain that what you say about the education of a child is true. The difficulties,

all of them, arise from the assumption that religion is a thing to be taught. I speak now not from theory but from actual experience. Arithmetic is a matter of lessons and memory: religion is inspired, inspired by looks, by tenderness, and by a certain attitude towards great objects. I should never permit the slightest levity in a child towards mountains, stars, the Bible or anything sublime, nor towards anything beautiful.

As to compromises, of course 'what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?' but before we denounce, we must be certain that one of the antitheses is nothing but Christ and light, and the other nothing but darkness and Belial. The orbit of the earth is a noble compromise, and our existence is a compromise between passion and intellect. Without the passion life would not be life, nor without the intelligence.

Oh yesterday, yesterday in Ashdown Forest! One of those days to make you forgive a month of easterly winds. My walking powers are failing. I get very tired after exertion which only ten years ago would have been a trifle. I often think of Nestor, although I lay no claim to his wisdom. He would have given it all for an hour of his youth when in the battle he 'was the first that slew a man'. However, I got down to a divine little dell in the moor through which ran a stream of water which really seemed to *add* light to the pebbles in

its bed. Warm sun, blue sky, white clouds, wonderful!

Affectionately yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

27.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.
16 July 1901.

MY DEAR MABEL,

I should like to know how you are. If Miss Partridge is with you, ask her to enclose a scrap upon this point. Your sister Winifred was here last Saturday and Sunday. I wish you were as strong as she appears to be. I was very glad to see her.

We have had a curious week. On Saturday the new man and his wife came. They had both been highly recommended, and had been to see us two or three times. They had given up their house and sold part of their furniture and evidently intended to remain. Everything went on well till Sunday afternoon, when without any warning the woman bolted. She did not tell us she was going, but Molly met her crying in the lane. She gave no reason for her departure, in fact Molly could get nothing out of her. The husband stayed behind. I sent him after her, and when he came back he reported that 'her nerves were upset, that she had had a trying week, that she could not face her responsibilities, and that she had gone to her aunt's'.

Responsibilities ! and she has been in business and let lodgings ! He did not go far with her, but permitted her to find her way to her aunt's unattended. Yesterday morning I directed him to go and see her. He came back in about two hours, telling me he could not find her as she had gone to the Cross. Instead of returning by the Cross he came by another road. No word by message or letter has reached us from her. You, being a woman, can perhaps resolve this riddle. I cannot, but Mrs. Hemsley, a very talkative but uncommonly shrewd creature who dwells in the cottage just below us, says 'words'. To-morrow I go to London on a hunt for another couple. You can imagine our perplexities and worry.

If you have the opportunity, I wish you would ask the first clerical person you meet of what use Christianity is. I really begin to believe that it is not only of no use but that if it could be swept out of existence we should morally gain by the disappearance with it of whole continents of cant. The great majority of the English people, excepting a few like the Quakers, the Bishop of Hereford and the Dean of Durham, read and approve the *Daily Mail* or the *Telegraph* or the *Times*, and in so doing must put Christ in a cupboard and turn the key. They dare not look at Him and ask whether He would have approved this war. 'Oh,' but they will perhaps say, 'what has Christianity to do with politics?' If it has nothing to do with politics

or daily life it is not a religion. A religion is not a tangle of metaphysical subtleties nor a nostrum for preserving eternally the salt that keeps our carcasses from putrefaction. Another possible excuse may be disagreement as to facts, but upon all that are important there is none. The real truth is that our so-called Christianity is the merest external film which the slightest bubble of passion or interest can wreck in an instant. Some good creatures, knowing in their hearts all that I have said to be indisputable, turn away and seek for refuge in Shakespeare and the musical glasses. I cannot, and if I were twenty years younger I would go about the country and put this simple question incessantly, provided Christian brickbats and hobnails did not murder me, 'OF WHAT USE IS CHRISTIANITY?' Say frankly it is dead, that it is an exploded enthusiasm, and I shall respect you. I do not respect hypocrisy either at early communion or in the conventicle.

Much love, including Miss Partridge.

Affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

28.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

7 September 1901.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

You will be glad to know that Mabel has suffered no injury from her travelling and is, in

fact, as well as I have ever seen her, although she is certainly thinner than she was. It is a great pleasure to have her with us again. You, who are near London and have many intelligent friends, can hardly understand the relief which the presence of a woman like Mabel brings to a person like myself, living in a place like Crowborough. I have never seen any town or village so completely *average*, the average of middle-class respectability.¹ Every inhabitant, male and female, does the m. c. r. average, thinks the m. c. r. average (if the operation can be called thinking), and has the average m. c. r. manners and clothes. Nobody goes to church because there are any doubts to be solved or because there is any need for consolation, but because m. c. respectability ordains it proper to go. There isn't a democrat, socialist, doubter, or disciple of any ism from the railway station to the Beacon Road, and at times I feel as if I could welcome a theosophist or anti-vaccinationist or even the American lady who has just discovered Bacon was the son of Elizabeth by Leicester. The demoralization of servant-girls is a favourite topic with the women, the wickedness of preferring Eastbourne and Brighton shops to the charms of the villa. They do not see that this general move-

¹ It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that any other name might stand here for Crowborough. He had friends there over whom he could be very enthusiastic indeed. The interest in such a passage is of course general, and in so far as it is particular it is particular to himself.

ment is a thing not to be denounced but to be explained. Pray do not accuse me of conceit in speaking harshly of Crowborough society. I boast no superiority : but [what] I do desire is simplicity, and that those with whom I have to do should tell me what they really are. I have been much struck since I have lived here with the discovery that, by me at least, the trick of talking what is not believed is so easily acquired. I had a terrible experience the other day. Somebody called and began to discuss —, . . . enlarged on the proprieties, and said his intercourse with — must cease. He went on for some time in Crowborough m. c. r. style, but I did not dissent, and when he left me he was convinced, I am afraid, that I quite agreed with him. Whether — has been prudent or not is not the question : this man's reasons for not going to his house again were altogether commonplace and worthless, and I ought to have protested against them. I was very sad after he had departed, and asked myself of what use were my convictions if I concealed them just when they ought to be expressed. I tried to excuse myself on the ground that I was very tired, but it wouldn't do. I shall have to recant to him. It is easy to understand that strength, earnestness and enthusiasm should be catching, but I find that feebleness, artificiality and insincerity are even more so. I am sure I was born to live with good people only. All this moralizing gossip has been drawn on you by Mabel.

I see in the paper that the estate at Ashtead which includes Street Farm is to be sold. I wonder if your house is also included, and, if so, whether you will buy it. I have just had an offer for nearly a twelvemonth of a house rent free on the west coast of Scotland. I should like to go, but I should never persuade Molly to come. It would, I dare say, be rather a perilous venture for her to be thirty or forty miles from a town. If I were to be ill, she wouldn't like the responsibility of looking after me without advice, although I should not much mind. As to nearness to London it is very little to me now, excepting that a handy dentist is convenient. I would go to Tartary to get quiet days and nights, but I am afraid I could not expect them anywhere. Patience, patience! I have been reading Tauler lately in the German edition. I wonder how you, with your clear, definite mind, would get on with him? I am not sure that the effect on me is altogether good, although he is so lovely that I cannot leave him. The disappearance of such a religion, using the word in its original sense, of such a noble, matchless instrument for securing resignation and establishing every human virtue breeds infinite regret. But regret is useless, it is of no use to look back, we must go forward in trust and hope, whither God wills.

Affectionately as always,

W. HALE WHITE.

Write to me soon.

29.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

26 October 1901.

MY DEAR MABEL,

You need not fear 'quarrelling' so far as I am concerned. People who quarrel over a single difference cannot be attached along any great length of line or by large surfaces. I take no notice of newspapers: they are all liars; nor do I contend about the conduct of the war. More than this, I believe that the Boers made great mistakes. But the one point is—were the reasons given in Mr. Chamberlain's speeches and the dispatches between July and September 1899 sufficient for bloodshed? We may be quite sure that if any other reasons existed at that time we should have had them. I have read those speeches and dispatches, considering this to be my duty as a citizen, and do solemnly declare my belief to be that war for the privileges of the Uitlanders was a crime which ought to have been condemned as treason. As to its consequences we shall see; that is to say, I may not, but you will, and they will turn out to be more disastrous than those from any war since 1815. There is no prospect at present of a close until the National Debt has been increased by a third, and for what? But for this I do not care so much as I do for the confusion of right and wrong which has been begotten in us. . . .

As to Christianity, you mistake me. I never intended to discuss the general question whether it does good or harm, but I affirm that if we were genuine believers in the gospels, if we were true disciples of Jesus, not of the official, symbolic, ecclesiastical Christ, but of the real Galilean of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we should not be at war in South Africa. . . . Furthermore, that the attempt to reconcile our modern ways with the teaching of the New Testament produces a condition of mind worse than that in which we should be without the New Testament, because we have immorality plus hypocrisy and because the embrace of opposites is damnation to the soul, incapacitating it for any vision of the truth.

I don't know how it is—I have thought about you much lately, always fancying you in trouble. Maybe it is that you went away ill and I cannot get rid of the last impression. I look back on your visit with anything but pleasure, and see you lying on the sofa pretending there was nothing much the matter. Pray do not misunderstand me. I was thankful you were here, but I was very anxious and I could not bear to think of your return to solitude. Your portrait with the shawl helps my melancholy moods. Do, my dear child, get me exactly that likeness (which cannot be improved), but without the white wrapper so suggestive of unpleasant things. And now good-night and a blessing on you.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

30.

9 St. James's Square,
Bath.

13 December 1901.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

We determined to escape from Crowborough for a time and try a milder climate or at any rate a warmer house. Mr. Archibald Constable, brother of the Constable you have seen, is staying in Bath with his wife for the winter, and was so kind in pressing us to be near him and in providing lodgings for us that here we are. The weather outside, I believe, is bitter, but I do not know much about it, for I am shut up with a cold in my throat and chest. I can hear enough, however, to prove that Bath has no fortification against a north-east wind. I wish very much you were near us, for Bath and S. S. P. are inseparable in my mind.

Mabel and I have had some correspondence about the quality of her letters. She always puts me off, with a purpose I believe, and tells me nothing but what the Sankeys and other people are doing, all mere outside talk which does not interest me in the least, and all written in a desperate hurry. Never a word is there about herself or anything of any real importance to her. She told Molly the last time she was with us that disbelief in the Incarnation must be with her a barrier to all true friendship. What does a woman with such singular penetration as hers mean by this ! I don't

want to be egotistical, but I will boldly affirm that even the parsons do not and cannot believe that there was as much God in Jesus Christ as I believe there was. Please observe the 'cannot'. The official theory absolutely prevents a true appreciation of the Divine in Christ. But this is by the way. Maybe that Mabel is afraid. If so, I shall say no more. My affection for her is unchangeable.

I hear that you have quite gone over the horizon for me. Five engagements for lecturing, I am told, on education or the psychology of children. But although these are subjects of which I know nothing I am glad, for I am sure that whatever you say on any subject will do great good. I have just been re-reading your last letter and admiring again the wisdom of your advice about 'letting-go'. In about a week I shall be seventy years old! There is not much that I can let go or need to let go now, but I tremble when I imagine what I should have been with the end so near if I had not let go in earlier days and thereby secured an entrance for affirmations which abide. Excepting the dread of decay or pain, no very serious terrors remain, and science is not hostile but welcome. I am more and more afraid of letting go my friends, or rather that they may let me go. When a man is young there is generally something attractive in him, in the novelty of that for which he stands, in his hopes and his capacity for acquisitions. No effort is necessary for attachment to him, but to threescore

and ten the best we can offer sincerely is ' I have always liked you in time past, and I will not hurt your feelings by breaking away from you now, although you have nothing to give me '. By ' we ' I do not mean you. With love.

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

Send me a card telling me where you lived in Bath. I mean to see all the historic houses in the city. Landor, I find, was close to St. James's Square. Please do not write in trains. It is so bad for eye and head, and it will make you believe you have no leisure.

31.

9 St. James's Square,
Bath.

31 December 1901.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

I do not like to be defrauded of my emotion, and I want to know precisely whether the house now called Barnard House, corner, detached, looking on the church in front and cricket ground at the back, is the one. I fancy by the newness of the inscription that the name has been changed within the last ten years. Hard by in Sydney Place is a tablet recording the residence of Jane Austen. You are quite right about the bells. I never was in a place so worried by them. At every opportunity they are rung, and during the last week we had

early communion at *six* a.m. The clergy seem to play with their bells as children do with rattles. It irritates me to notice that they consider they have a chartered right to annoy people which is indignantly denied to the Salvation Army and German bands.

When I was in the Quantocks I read in a kind of local history¹ compiled by a Mr. Nichols (an old and long since deceased clergyman in those parts) the story on which Wordsworth founded his *Somersetshire Tragedy*, destroyed in MS. most presumptuously by Professor Knight because he considered it unworthy. A Mr. Peach, of Bath, edited or published Nichols' book, and I wrote to him for more information. He had died and his daughter replied. Being in Bath I thought I would call on her. She is a woman of about forty-five, shrewd and very courteous, living in Pulteney Street, where she keeps a school. She knew all about your school and Miss Thirlwall, and she told me that she started in Pulteney Street when your friends departed. But alas! about the *Somersetshire Tragedy* I could get no further news. She had forgotten it and kept no copy!

Mr. Curry, Mr. Bright's brother-in-law, an Inspector of Schools, who lives on Bathwick Hill and who would have been a pleasant acquaintance,

¹ *The Quantocks and their Associations*. By the late Rev. William Luke Nichols. Second edition, revised and enlarged. London: Sampson Low, 1891. The first edition was published privately at Bath in 1873.

has been ill with pneumonia and was near to death. Mr. Constable's wife also is ill and we have not seen her. Consequently, we have been pretty exclusively our own company. I *do* wish you were here. I have begun my periodical re-reading of the Bible, and you are almost the only friend I now possess who, having been brought up on the Bible, can feel what I feel about it, what is in my blood and can never by any chemistry be extracted, and who nevertheless does not treat the Bible as an idol. More than ever am I confounded by it, more than ever do I cling to it, finding in it what I can find nowhere else. By the way, when you have leisure turn to the oft-quoted passage in Luke ix. 46-8; look at the parallel passage in Matthew xviii. 1-7, and tell me whether you agree with me that Luke and not Matthew gives the point of the words of Jesus. The disciples are disputing who are greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus says that he who receives a child in my name, because of me, from a divine motive, receives me, and he who receives me receives Him who sent me, and is great. This is the true natural history of the indwelling of God, of religion. How simple, how exclusive of theology!

. . . With love from both of us.

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

It is the last day of 1901. It is no mere form that I pray that in 1902 all the happiness you can receive may be yours.

32.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

22 March 1902.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

I hear you are going to Rugby on the 5th April. Can you come here on your return and stay as long as possible? Before you reply, reflect how long it is since we saw you and upon the consequent necessity—yes, *necessity*—of a visit. . . .

I sent you that paper,¹ not because I thought it would interest you much. You did not know the man, and it was intended only for his few surviving friends. I sent it because I was going to write to you and couldn't, and yet wanted just at that moment to let you have something from me—a stupid reason. I wish you had seen and heard Caleb Morris. Great readers, such as you, are apt to disbelieve in the stories of Chatham and Demosthenes, and to suppose that there is nothing in public speaking beyond what can be reported. You would rather have by the fireside what a man has to say. But oratory is as real and as indestructible an art as music. Like music it fills a place which nothing else can occupy. Caleb Morris was also a Christian, and this is even more singular than that he should have been eloquent—the last Christian I call him.

Your letter to me at Christmas was written when

¹ 'Caleb Morris' in the *British Weekly*, 6 March 1902.

we were at Bath. I forget if I answered it. For two pins I think I would have stayed there 'for ever', as Shelley used to say. We went on to Lyme Regis, and, most provoking, discovered on our last day but one that Mrs. Addington Symonds was there. I went at once to see her and found her in a perfectly lovely old house looking over that faery bay. She lives at Lyme in the winter and at Davos in the summer. She is all alone. I asked her if she minded the solitude, and she declared she loved it.

You told me you had been reading *Quo Vadis*, but you did not give me the purpose and intent of the book, and I was doubtful, therefore, about it and did not get it from the Library. My reading narrows daily. I am now in the middle of my annual or biennial perusal of the Bible, helped by my precious German translation, and every time I traverse the old, and, in a sense, familiar ground, the more I am amazed and the deeper is my emotion. Naturally with me association is tremendously powerful, but that alone does not account for the strength of the attraction. The number and magnitude of the things new to me are astonishing. I have got Ottley's *History of the Hebrews* to help my utter ignorance of Biblical archaeology. He is rector of a country parish in Wiltshire, and his History is published by the Cambridge University Press. It is astounding. Stories which were a test of saving faith as late as

my young-manhood are pitched over with no compunction as 'legends', as 'unhistorical', and the inspiration reserved is 'moral'. But nothing of this has yet reached the ordinary curate and his hearers, judging by what goes on in Crowborough. We have had two or three newcomers lately—all essentially alike. The last amused me. She is full of all kinds of 'isms' and external peculiarities, but underneath is the same stony road on which not even a spontaneous weed lifts its head.

. . . Love from both of us.

Affectionately yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

33.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

4 June 1902.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have read your letter with much care and have tried it on a piano. I understand, I believe, nearly all of it, and shall keep it till we meet so that I may go over it again with you. I find a MS. note of mine, completely forgotten, to Milton's *P. L.*, Book I, l. 550, as follows :

'For a description of the Dorian mode see the last book of Aristotle's *Politics*. It produced a moderate and settled temper. It was "ethical". It was the gravest and manliest.' I must read again that passage in the *Politics*.

We have just got our two new servants. The woman is everything that could be wished, but the man, who was wounded in the Sudan, is very weak and can do but little. Consequently the garden is a great worry to me. He is not strong enough, I find, to cut the grass with a machine. I tried to help him, and every muscle in my body seems wrenched. I do not want to make another change, as his wife is so excellent. Oh! this hateful housekeeping with all its idolatries of curtains, carpets and clipped lawns! I wish I could sweep away everything which gives me no real pleasure in and about this eminently respectable villa. How I should gain in peace of mind!

I think it must have been on the day you were out with Mrs. Holroyd that a friend of hers was here, a Mr. Hawes Turner, Keeper of the National Gallery, a pleasant provocative person who can draw—exquisitely to my eyes—in water-colour.

That defect in —— (of whom I know very little) is partly constitutional, but mostly Oxford. Excepting the schoolmaster, the Oxford man is the person with whom I have least in common and who irritates me the most. The cool assumption of superiority, preventing all enthusiasm, the ignoring of all merit which is not Oxford hall-marked, the mutual admiration of Oxford men in reviews and books, the log-rolling; it is disgusting. I took up a magazine the other day, written by Oxford men and published at the University.

The first article which caught my eye was entitled 'The Oxford View' of some great public question, I forget what. I do not notice the same conceit in Cambridge. I have come to the conclusion that a literary training, nowadays at any rate, and much reading, tend to the choking-up and obliteration of experience and personality. Montaigne quotes a Latin proverb which his editor thus translates: 'Le vulgaire est plus sage, parcequ'il n'est sage qu'autant qu'il le faut.'

My love. Molly's too.

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

I have just turned up the passage in the *Politics*. Aristotle says: 'other harmonies again produce a moderate and settled temper, which appears to be the peculiar effect of the Dorian . . . But for the purposes of education, as I have already said, those modes and melodies should be employed which are ethical, such as the Dorian.'

Plato (*Laches*) calls the Dorian mode 'a harmony of words and deeds, the true Hellenic mode', and again (*Republic*, Bk. III), 'it is warlike: it sounds the note or accent which a brave man utters in the hour of danger and stern resolve, or when his cause is failing and he is going to wounds or death, or is overtaken by some other evil, and at every such crisis meets the blows of fortune with firm step and a determination to endure.'

34.

37 Royal Parade, Eastbourne.

3 November 1902.

MY DEAR MABEL,

We have just come to these lodgings, and I have this moment read your note. A question occurs to me which I want to ask at once. Suppose we were to return to Eastbourne at Christmas, would you spend your holidays with us? You are conceited, and think everybody is fond of you and desires your company. I, who hear what people say, know that nobody really desires it but ourselves. It is odd that we should do so, but so it is. You cannot stand the cold at Crowborough nor the high altitude, but Eastbourne is possible.

There is a great deal to be said about Lucretius which I cannot begin to say now. He is one of the grandest figures in ancient Rome and must be considered historically. Never was there a more fearless soul, and when I contrast his faith with the fetishism of modern religion I lose hope in evolution from worse to better. Not in China is he reincarnated. He is, as Goethe said of Schiller (I think), the soul of some star.

Mrs. Arthur Tennyson, sister-in-law of Alfred, has sent me a whole boxful of Dorothy Wordsworth's letters, folio sheets, quarto sheets, covered and crossed with the finest writing. Ach! those were the days when men and women had something to say to one another. I am like an ox in

a hayfield. I don't want to go to Heaven for the sake of the music, or wings, or proficiency in virtue. I have always wanted to go in order to see my beloved D., preserved, I trust, as she was in the days of her youth when she wandered over her Cumberland mountains and hunted the waterfalls.

. . . Love from both of us.

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

35.

37 Royal Parade, Eastbourne.

16 November 1902.

MY DEAR MABEL,

It is then settled. We shall expect at least a fortnight, and as much longer as you can give. I am not quite sure we will go to Eastbourne, but it shall be some level place, selected for you. I do not like Eastbourne. Winifred, who has been very good in coming to see us, is by far the pleasantest object I have seen in it. Miles upon miles of villas all so eminently respectable, parading of eminently respectable schools, two and two, promenading of crowds of women eminently respectable also, women accompanied with idle half-pay men (such a number of idle men I never before met), every shop brand new, not an old book in the whole town. Bath was much more interesting. There is, to be sure, the sea, but it has been tamed into gentility as far as possible by

a straight wall from Pevensey Marsh to Beachy Head.

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

We go home to-morrow morning.

A strong reason against Eastbourne is the east wind. During the last two days it has been bitter in the extreme, and it sweeps the parade like a fire of artillery.

36.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

2 December 1902.

MY DEAR MISS PARTRIDGE,

I must say it was more important to me to know how you were than to discuss the moral order of the universe. What a creature you are to start in a sheet of note-paper Aristotle, Plato, Kant, Hegel, Jeremy Bentham, the Book of Job, the Schoolmen and the Fathers! My difficulty is simple. When you punish a criminal and you say that you have punished him to do him good, or to terrify evildoers, or to prevent him from doing wrong in future, have you exhausted all the meanings of punishment? ¹ Please ask Mrs. Dowson. I should like to see her. I partly agree with her. A person with a metaphysical mind can certainly recite the Athanasian creed. The

¹ Cf. *Last Pages from a Journal*, p. 253.

damnatory clauses are also ' simple '. My objection to the creed is not that it is false. It may be true for all I know. But it has encouraged the belief that religion is an intellectual subtlety, and this I conceive to be mischievous. The necessary subtleties of true religion are beyond the reach of ordinary minds, and it is a grievous pity to import any which are unnecessary.

Molly has not been so well again. . . . I hope to get her off to Mrs. Bright this week, and wish she could stay for a month instead of a fortnight. Her position, living with me alone, is unfortunate, but I do not see how it can be altered. If I could afford it I would get some cheerful person to live with us and be her companion, somebody quite unlike ourselves. . . .

When you have read the enclosed, send it to Mabel and ask her to return it to me as I want to keep it. Unless you yourself can remember, ask her also to tell me if these letters have been published before. They are interesting, apart from spiritualism, as showing that Browning, notwithstanding his love for his wife, did not mind using very strong language to express difference from her.¹

I would gladly get your new hat for you if I were near Ashted and had minute instructions. By the way, what is the average cost of clothing, everything included, you three sisters? I want

¹ See *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 November 1902.

to know how much it takes to dress a woman living as you live, and your average will be a good guide.

Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

Have just been looking over old notes on *Hamlet*. Have omitted to observe the ineffectuality of the Ghost's urging. 'Do not forget' says the Ghost, but H. did nothing. After the play and the clearest proofs of the King's guilt H. consents to go to England. If he had obeyed the Ghost then, Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes, Hamlet would have been saved. Would that I could profit by this example!

What a hodge-podge!! I cannot write letters.

37.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

19 March 1903.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

. . . I must have expressed myself obscurely about the drawing. What I meant was that children ought to draw something which is before their eyes all the time that they are at work. It is of no consequence what the object is, so long as it is not too difficult. The whole educational value of the lesson lies in training the hand to follow what the eye really sees, and not what the

head thinks the eye sees. For example, the eye really sees a cube thus—



and it really sees the lines on a railway converge in the distance. It strikes me of enormous importance in all departments that we should *look* steadfastly, carefully, and endeavour to represent accurately. Every attempt at invention I should rigidly suppress if I were a teacher.¹

... I am looking forward eagerly to April and your arrival. ... The influenza has left behind not only a cough but a strange incapacity for walking, and I do not seem to improve. I was usually rather strong on my legs, although I had to confess of late the inevitable weakness of age. So you see I need your company and 'a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord'.

Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

38.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

10 September 1903.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

What I have to say shall be put in the *inverse* order of importance.

¹ On the envelope Miss Partridge has written 'Children's drawings. Hopeless as a guide to children. The word "rigid" !!!'

Have you got in your garden a bit of red valerian? If not, can you suggest the name of any person from whom, perhaps, it can be obtained? I have tried Sutton's, but in vain.

Molly tells me Mabel is writing a novel. She has said nothing to me about it, perhaps because I, in ignorance of what was going on, expressed my astonishment that Mr. — could read his own stories to his friends. She will, of course, show you the MS. Now, I want you, if you are asked to criticize, to impress on her that she must write what she feels and thinks. She propounded a theory to me that in conversation and in writing a person's real self should be concealed. I at first thought she was arguing for arguing's sake, but I found that she was not, and I am bound to say that during her stay here she put her theory into practice. Perhaps she was not well: she certainly for some reason was not happy. I am not going to debate the abstract proposition. She has derived it, I believe, from Browning. But I do want to say that if her book is to be worth anything it must be herself. Do pray counsel her not to imitate Miss Austen and to avoid sharp, clever epigrams. She is the acutest person I know, and every talent has its temptations. I do hope you will not misunderstand me. If she were commonplace I should not trouble myself about her book. It is because she is remarkable that I am anxious she should not go astray. If she will but follow

her own real instinct she will be able to tell us something worth hearing, but if she leaves her instinct for some notion adopted from the outside she will fail. I am a little afraid, because when she was with us she seemed to take pleasure in little semi-satirical pictures, very clever, of people she knew, but what was in her heart and mind I could not divine. I have said that she will fail, not meaning that she will not write well, but that she will be in competition with hundreds of gifted, facile creatures who can also write well. But she will have no competitor if she will just pitch her mask into the fire. To this part of my note there need be no reply.

. . . Ever affectionately yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

39.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
9 January 1904.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

I have not as yet looked at more than four pages of my almanack. Pictures and verses are so beautiful that I shall spend much time over it. Of course, as you see, I took the brown one. You could not have sent me anything of more worth to me. You have done it yourself, the handwriting is yours, the selection of the poetry is yours. I shall not hang it up, but keep it [in] my own room in one of my drawers, and take it out now

and then, and think of my best of friends who gave it to me. My love to you over and over again. What a foolish word is 'best'. I find myself now so prone to slip into phrases, and to use common, current, meaningless expressions. I don't object to them because they are current, but because they convey nothing—'Best of friends'—stupid, connotes O, as Mill would say. What I really wanted to tell you was something shut up in that 'best' and out of sight; that you are a constant guide and help to me, and, surest test of the worth, the depth of the relationship between one human being and another, when I do not know what to do I say to myself 'What would she do?' For I have learned so much of you now that, without your advice, in any particular case I am distinctly and authentically informed how you would deal with it. And, when I come to myself, I follow.

I believe I told you Miss Bishop¹ is coming here for a day. She is a friend of Miss Saint's. When I have seen her I will write to you. I rather dread the meeting. It will [be] difficult to keep away from religion. Everything will seem to draw to it. What she is, I cannot say, excepting what I have gathered from a couple of notes, but in Father Tyrrell's book, which I suppose I may take as representative of her state of mind, my thread and his thread are warp and woof. There is no well defined bit of it which I would tear away.

¹ Afterwards Mrs. Hubert Burke.

In and out go the colours, the result being a *shot* admixture.

As to the 'cataclysm' it is certainly a fact that the Church has done more to dissolve belief than agnostics have done directly, so far as church people are concerned, but I often ask what is the value of disbelief or belief on theological matters. The disbeliever—I am speaking of ordinary people—has no solid ground for his scepticism, nor has the believer any for his faith. It is a vast subject and I am all at sea in it.

Some months ago the editor of the *Speaker* asked me to contribute to his paper. I told him I couldn't, but during the last few weeks I have read with great interest the new life of Galileo¹ and I have fancied I might put something together upon him as a man and upon his confession, not as a whitewashing apology, but to show how his weakness was but the natural outcome of his character, so natural that it is hardly right to call the confession apostasy. He is extraordinarily attractive and I became so sympathetic with him, following him in all his doubts, emotions, hopes, despairs, that at last I too knelt before the Inquisitors and verbally recanted. The old way of judging him, the old antithetic, Macaulay way, brightest and meanest, &c., &c.—what impossible fiction it is! How I wish I understood Italian and could read Galileo in his own tongue. At present

¹ By J. J. Fahie.

I have not got beyond the aspiration to say a word or two about him. It will probably end in nothing. Aspirations remain at 72, but ability to embody them is maimed or dead.

Mabel signs herself to me 'with sincere affection.' 'Sincere' always seems surplusage, for [if] affection is not sincere, what is? I could almost affirm that there is nothing else in the world which is sincere. So I will subscribe myself as

Your most grateful and affectionate
now and always,

W. HALE WHITE.

I have often coveted acquaintance with Leopardi, from what I have heard of him, but here again my ignorance prevents.

40.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

26 January 1904.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

I conjectured that Dante referred to the precession of the equinoxes, but I could not understand his calculations. The equinoxes move eastward 50·2 seconds each year on the average, and complete their circuit in 26,000 years. At this rate the age of Beatrice would be as nearly as possible 7 years. I puzzled over it a whole morning, until at last I found in Grant's *History of Physical Astronomy* that in Dante's time it was thought

that the rate was one degree in a hundred years and that the circuit was therefore completed in 36,000 years. Rossetti ought to have pointed out the mistake.

You see that in this case Dante does not speak from observation, but from book. Indeed, it was impossible for him to observe precession. His preference, not only here but elsewhere, for indirect statement is curious, but you can possibly explain it.

The translation (literal) of the Latin is—

‘The sphere of the fixed stars . . . whose motion . . . is common to all the wandering stars [planets ¹] is turned from the west to the east upon the poles of the zodiac [strictly speaking, the earth’s polar axis revolves round the zodiacal pole, i.e. pole of the ecliptic ¹], in some hundreds of years, according to Ptolemy, through the space of one degree. By the same motion, together with it the spheres of the seven planets are turned so that they traverse the zodiac in 36,000 years.’

I see that Toynbee corrects these figures, but I had not read your extract when I was be-muddled.

I have got the Temple *Convito* on the strength of your recommendation. I do not think I ever read it, although in years gone by I devoured and did most patiently digest Dante in English and German.

The Galileo paper was nothing but a few notes

¹ His own brackets,

on him as a human being. I have sent it to the *Speaker*. When I get a copy you shall see it. The Dorothy Wordsworth letters made a beginning in the *Athenaeum* of the 23rd.

. . . Miss Bishop—age about 40—quite white-haired. Hair was black, I hear, till her stepmother's death some years ago, in whom she was entirely wrapped up. Is partly Irish. Rose la Touche, with whom Ruskin was so deeply in love, was her cousin. Knew Ruskin well. Oddly enough, is a great friend of Miss Saint's, who came up to see her. They kissed one another, and evidently were very intimate. Was a great friend of Spectator Hutton, and has more than 1,000 letters from him. He left her a legacy. Other connections, literary, and also rather high up, but does not display them. As to anything further can hardly speak, having seen so little of her. Good talker; a little perhaps too much of London society fluency, but this may have been due to circumstances; first meeting. Religion carefully shunned by me. Too big a subject for so short a time. She is evidently a sincere 'Catholic', but of the newer, liberal school: gave me an article by one of [her] acquaintances, which I enclose and do not want again. Wishes me to meet her Father Tyrrell, S.J. Shall think two or three times before consenting, as I dread argument or even conversation with a Jesuit on religion, especially as he is learned and pious. Told stories well, all of them interesting

and human. . . . Fond of France: goes there continually: father (old man) French in sympathy. So much and no more. You must meet her. At any rate she would 'amuse' you, not in the modern but the old sense of the word.

Tell Jo¹ I was so proud the other day. I was able to lug in, abrupt, head over heels fashion, her Shakespeare work, and to say that I had the honour of knowing the author.

Best love.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

41.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
14 July 1904.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

. . . I have not seen Plumptre's *Æschylus* for many years, but I remember I thought it poor and diluted. I fancy you would prefer a plain literal rendering, bearing in mind what the loss to Milton would be if he were put into foreign prose. The Zeus of *Æschylus* is not all-powerful, and I believe, although I speak with timidity on such a question, that no Greek god is endowed with omnipotence. Fate, the Destinies, who are superior to the gods, are not considered as Olympians. I imagine that we shall never comprehend the

¹ Miss A. J. Partridge. She had compiled a work which she is only able to describe as 'not a concordance'.

relationship in the Greek mind of Fate to the personal divinities, because the Greek himself neither comprehended nor sought to comprehend it. Omnipotence, if you consider it accurately, is sheer impossibility, a pure metaphysical abstraction. All power implies an external *other*, and, therefore, cannot be unlimited.

I have been much occupied during the last few months in reading everything on which I could lay my hands about St. Francis of Assisi, and have been submerged in him. Unhappily, although the French have done much, it is impossible to be thorough with him in ignorance of Italian. Sabatier is, of course, a learned Franciscan scholar, but he is Unitarian and, worse, romantically vaporous. He cannot tell his story simply but plays the showman, I was almost about to say the cheap-jack, in every other sentence, so that I really am better pleased with the unhesitating Roman Catholic who repeats in perfect faith all the astounding miracles attributed in after years to the Saint. Oh me ! what a tale his life is, what pathos ! The noblest ideal since that of the Galilean youth, and in a dozen years he saw the inevitable lapse ; system, an organization, and the disappearance of the heavenly dream. At forty-five he died. Before his death he resigned his office, unable to continue the contest. Nevertheless he believed he had not failed. ' To the Day of Judgement ', it was promised him by the Lord Jesus, ' the Order shall endure.' Of

course he was a failure externally. The Lady Poverty was speedily deposed, not one of his Rules has survived, they were totally impracticable; he has founded, in reality, nothing, he has gone like last night's sunset; and yet, if we are believers in the true Kingdom of God, never has there been a more absolute success.

. . . Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

42.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
11 April 1905.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

After some delay I succeeded in getting the Loisy¹ from the library. I have read part of it, but to say anything about it is impossible. The subject is foreign to me, at any rate just now. Then, again, there is my ignorance. I know nothing, nothing whatever, about ecclesiastical history. Lastly, I am sure that if Loisy had any interest for me I should have to study him for a long, long time before I could venture to give an opinion about him, and, whatever it might be, it would probably appear worthless the day after it was given. For I find that opinions, mine I mean, on the matters with which he deals have a curious trick of dissolving themselves utterly almost as soon as they have taken shape. . . .

¹ '*L'Evangile et l'église* probably' wrote Miss Partridge.

. . . You have succeeded in doing what I am trying to do. You have found a dentist nearer than London. I cannot go to London again to have a tooth out. Waiting about Victoria Station with bleeding gums is not pleasant. Why do the gods reveal to human beings so much that is worthless or positively hateful (Mabel has described a gramophone to us), and do not present them with a simple, gradual method of tooth extraction? I had two accidents, followed by horrible pain, with my jaws, before I went to Matheson, and I am afraid to leave him.

Your story about Mrs. —— might, I suppose, be a story about three parts of Ashted and Epsom and I am sure of all Groombridge. What specially interested me was your reply. It is absolutely just. How often is the consideration of that which is best for others the genuine motive? The worst of it is that when we ‘discharge our consciences’ we discharge what we mistake for conscience and is pure prejudice. It is curious how good people find a blessed relief and termination of duty in this discharge. I am more and more amazed at their cocksureness. I was reading this morning those words of Sophocles, ‘where I lack light, ’tis my wont to be silent’.

I have been to the Whitechapel Exhibition. It is better than a score of Academies. The pictures are there which, when I saw them as a youth, moved me as perhaps no art has moved me since;

the Claudio and Isabella, the Hamlet and Ophelia, the Eve of St. Agnes and the mountains of Moab behind the Scape-goat, &c., &c. I rejoice to find that they move me still, in fact almost too much, for association is added. I have been also to see Mrs. Boyce, widow of the great water-colour painter of whom we hear so much in Burne Jones's *Life*. She has a good many of her husband's drawings. Their pre-Raphaelite beauty is enough to break your heart with ecstasy. Some day the world will judge this 'movement' aright. It is not possible just yet. On my way to Mrs. Boyce's I passed by Rossetti's house, where I remember seeing 'Dante's Dream', and then I went on to 5 Cheyne Row (now No. 24). I had not been there since Carlyle died. It was still early in the morning; there were no visitors, and I was left to myself. I had, of course, never been in the bedrooms before. 'Frugality' was written on every bit of furniture. Nothing ugly, but nothing which did not supply a want; everything solid and steady: every book, save a few presentation copies, bearing most obvious marks of use. It was this frugality which enabled him to be so generous. It was not self-denial. He did not seek for pleasure where it was not to be found. I copied out a scrap which I discovered.¹ Here it is, and when you

¹ For this 'scrap' see the last page of his preface to Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*, 'Three nights ago, stepping out after midnight.'

have a quiet moment read it and *imagine*. Return it to me. What are the 'literary' judgements on Carlyle worth?

Mabel is much better than I expected she would be. Her condition, however, is dangerous. Because she feels stronger, she talks of going to Eastbourne for a day. She proposes to walk up to Mrs. Brewer's from the station. Such an expedition would wear me out effectually.

Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

Not a word about your own health generally in your last letter. Suppression of all information about yourself is wrong. I don't want you to wail or waul, but I should like to hear how you are. When you were with us I thought you were not up to the mark.

I have just heard that my grandson, Hale, has passed his Little-go at Cambridge. He failed at first in Paley!! but they gave him a second chance in the indispensable *Evidences*, and he got through. Can you conceive a greater absurdity?

43.

The Cottage,

Groombridge, Kent.

13 November 1905.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

. . . Mrs. Colenutt uses the word 'supernatural' in her own way. She is really a firm

believer in the supernatural. I agree with you emphatically that life is not life without it : in fact the antithesis between natural and supernatural is false. It disappears the moment we begin to think seriously and are able to liberate ourselves from the tyranny of words. So, the infinite is not set over against the finite, the one there, the other here—rather ‘ thou in me and I in thee ’. I sent you the letter because you have often heard me talk of the writer, and because it is remarkable for its strength, coming from a woman of seventy-nine. I have known her since I was a boy. She has always stood like an oak in Ryde. She has a peculiar way of never judging actions or people by any unauthentic convention, but by the laws of her own heart and reason.

I am endeavouring to amuse myself by picking out passages from the *Rambler* which I should like to make into a little volume, prefixing a few observations on Johnson. Some of the things he says are so terribly close to fact that I can hardly get through them. Sometimes he is so pathetic, all the more so for his stateliness and restraint, that ‘ the mother swells up towards my heart ’. I feel, and have for years felt, a burning desire to express *my* truth about Johnson, that is to say, his truth for me, but alas ! I now blunder and stumble. I look at what I put upon paper and it is not one bit what I mean, and I can do no better. Besides, nobody will publish.

I should like to hear when your lectures will be over. I may hope you will then come. A man is delivering at —— an extension course on Astronomy. Molly and I thought of going, but a friend who went told us that he let himself down to make the schoolgirls gape and to raise laughter. She felt insulted, and stayed at home next time.

. . . Your most affectionate friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

44.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
20 December 1906.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

I heard that you are quite well again. I am thankful. I have had a bad cold which, after being driven out of the citadel, has lurked in obscure places like the Diabolonians in Mansoul, and could not or rather cannot be expelled.

. . . Miss Jenkinson about a fortnight ago reported to Molly that in the ——, a paper I did not know, there was an article about my father and myself. We got a copy and found the article was by a man named ——. He had some praise for my father, but said that he was 'a failure in business' and was 'a shining light in a little sect'. This annoyed me a good deal and was utterly untrue. My father never failed, but paid everybody what he owed. He did not make money by business, but that is another matter. He never would have

made money in any business. His thoughts were elsewhere ; with the Schools and the welfare of the town. The ' little sect ' was the Independent sect, very strong in Bedfordshire and the adjoining counties ever since Cromwell's time. The ' old Meeting-house ' in Bedford held 800 people and was always full on Sunday. But my father left the ' little sect ' in 1850, and thenceforth was what is called ' nothing '. He was never a ' shining light '. I am ignorant of Mr. ——'s occupation and methods, but I suppose he is one of the wretched Israelites who must complete the daily tale of bricks with or without straw. Bedford was not peculiar so far as its Independency was concerned. Newport-Pagnel, close to Olney, was a stronghold, and at Maulden, a little village not so big as Ashted twenty years ago, was another large meeting-house in which most of the farmers worshipped with some small yeomen and a few of the gentry. The minister of this chapel was an astronomer and used it as an observatory. I have seen his telescope there. I made Molly write a brief corrective note to the editor. . . .

The clergy of ——'s school and their followers make a fuss about spiritual religion, but they never look at the great religious documents of the world, Thomas à Kempis, St. Francis, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the *Serious Call*, to say nothing of mystics like Tauler. —— told me gravely the other day that ' nobody now read the *Pilgrim's*

Progress'. . . . Nor do I see any reason why they should read it. It is true that the Oxford University Press publish an edition, but that is as literature. The *experience* which makes the *Pilgrim* so great, and to some few so precious, is rare and not now to be expected.

— is a good man, very liberal, will not repeat the Athanasian Creed, 'broad' almost to the absence of limit. For my own part, rather than his church, I would almost prefer to enter

the sheepfold's lath-and-plaster entry.

He was there.

He Himself with His human air,
On the narrow path-way, just before.

I saw the back of Him, no more.

He had left the chapel, then, as I.

I have been reading Renan's *L'Antechrist* lately, read it twice, and read *Revelation* twice. I have been amazed, indeed too much amazed, for I could not shape what came into my head. Renan is invaluable, such a scholar, such method, how different from English and German expositors! I could go on for a long time on *Revelation*, but it would be incoherent and I should have to tear it all up. It is only with little things now that I can be lucid. (Why is it Antechrist and not Antichrist? Before the Second coming? Greek and English *Anti*, but French *Ante*.) Renan is too often disagreeable, especially about women, but you can spit that out. He is an immense help.

. . . I must stop. I haven't said nearly all. I trust you will be here soon. You need not bother yourself about writing. I know that just now every moment of your time must be taken up. In fact, one reason why I have put off writing to you was that a reply would be a burden.

Most affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

45.

The Cottage, Groombridge,
Tunbridge Wells.

. . . God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

Tennyson, *The Passing of Arthur*.

9 June 1907.

MY DEAREST SOPHIE,

It is quite true: we are always forcing our own gods on other people, never reflecting that God, to be God and not an idol, must be sought and found by the worshipper.

. . . I have finished my introduction to the *Sterling*,¹ only thirty-two pages, but in all sincerity, it is poor. I can see afar off what it ought to be, but, as for achieving it, I might just as well try to pull down the moon. However, I must be content. There is a characteristically tranquil essay by Steele in the *Spectator* on the folly of the demands made by age. The young man wants long life—well, *you* have had it.

¹ Carlyle's *Life of Sterling* in 'The World's Classics', 1907.

I had a letter the week before last in unimpeachable English from a school-teacher in a town in the interior of Japan which I cannot find on the map! He asks for literary information which I cannot give, and I in reply have sent him a few questions.¹

. . . Mrs. Hawes Turner has made me a present of a copy, done by the hand of an exquisite artist, that is to say her own, of the portrait of Miss Jenkinson as a girl which hangs in her bedroom at Ocklye. I was always fond of that portrait. It was very kind of Miss Jenkinson to lend it, and very

¹ The 'literary information' which he cannot give is information about himself. This, of course, is characteristic. The letter has been preserved. The writer, 'Ryuji Tanabé by name, 31 years old, a poor teacher by profession in this remote town of Japan' (Kana zawa), tells of his long search for the author of the *Autobiography*, &c. 'Ten years ago an English missionary in Tokyo recommended me to read *Mark Rutherford's Autobiography*, and lent me a copy of it. I was very much interested in it, and read it over and over again. Next I read *Deliverance* lent me by the missionary. My passion for *Mark Rutherford* was such that as I desired to possess it myself but could not afford to buy it then (I was a poor student, and the edition was Trübner & Co.'s) I copied it with my own hand. At the same time I yearned to know who was Mark Rutherford (or who was Reuben Shapcott), whether he was a living author or not.' There follows an account of how the writer pursued his inquiry, how as time went on he heard of the other works, *Clara Hopgood*, *Miriam's Schooling*, *Pages from a Journal*, &c., which he was now able to afford to buy, sending for them to London one by one, how he slowly pieced together all the scraps of information which came his way, till: 'Now, Dear Sir, I have at last found you out after the labours of ten years.'

kind of Mrs. Hawes Turner to spend so much time on its reproduction.

. . . Most affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

46.

The Cottage, Groombridge,
Tunbridge Wells.

2 August 1907.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

You are wrong as to new books. I am always inquiring after something new and good, but I do not see why I should read a bad novel because it was published last week.

I have read *Miss Mona* for the most part twice ; once carefully all through and then about nine-tenths of it again in order to find out the drift. But I cannot. *Miss Mona* does not, I suppose, pretend to be a story, but whatever it is intended to be it ought to have movement. I do not mean movement to a catastrophe, but that the portrait of the heroine ought to develop and gradually complete itself. Suddenly, however, she vanishes. The sermon puts an end to her. Nor do we hear what becomes of the Cresborough. Why was it introduced if we are not to know what were the consequences ? Did she sell it or keep it ?

There is no sufficient reason given for Miss Mona's conversion to St. Saviour's. The reason at the end of the second chapter, ' If we were invited to the Court of a great King ', &c., is sufficient for

ritualistic observance by an ordinary, unoccupied young woman, but there must have been difficulties of belief, one would think, and of these we hear not a word. This is the more strange because we are expressly told Miss Mona was not 'very stupid'. Nor do I understand the reasons assigned for the faith (I ought to say the attendance) of the congregation. 'Perhaps because the vicar said his prayers; perhaps because, foolish as the jargon sounded, it was the truth to God, *and everybody knew it*' (italics mine). Can you make this out? I am altogether in the dark.

I cannot determine whether Miss Horace Smith is in sympathy with St. Saviour's. If she is not, something might be said to her which it would be unadvisable to say if she is.

There is much in the book which, if true, is an excrescence, a long digression of ten pages, for example, in Chapter IV on providing work for the unemployed, and the sermon at the end.

To conclude this little bit of what you may call cavilling criticism, Miss Mona, *so far*, does not interest me. She may be well worth knowing, but she may not. If she comes to live in Groombridge I shall certainly advise Molly to call, and I shall not be satisfied with the usual return visit of twenty minutes. I hope she did not sell her Cresborough to that disgusting snob Seaton, but will bring it with her.

There is much in *Miss Mona* which is singularly

good. I deliberately use the word 'singularly', because what is good in it is not usually a quality of youth. The gradual falling away of old friends on the change to Maple Road, 'not that they neglected her (that is not at all like friends)' could not be better. And yet perhaps the best of everything is the three pages about Mrs. Brown. The absence of elaboration, the reliance on suggestion, the freedom from point, are remarkable.

Miss Mona, as I have said, might or might not turn out to be interesting, but I am sure of Miss Horace Smith and should like to meet her. There is something not altogether revealed in her work, something secretly attractive which makes me think that a Sunday morning's walk with her through our lanes would be pleasant and instructive. I ought, by the way, to have noticed her style, which deserves all praise for its simplicity and purity. I have not observed a single clever sentence, nor one turned upside down, not a bit of smart cant (the worst of all cant).

.

The thermometer outside my window yesterday morning when I got up was 46. I do not like the cold. I have had a new window put into my bedroom, looking up the garden, so that I can shut the other windows on dusty afternoons. The roads are crowded with motor-cars full of extravagantly-dressed women. One of the worst effects of these cars, or rather of their occupants, is the develop-

ment of hate in me. I never hated sin so much, no, not any crime in the Decalogue. But is not this flaunting insolence sin? The 'kine of Bashan'!!

I have been reading the *Spectator* lately. But I am almost sure I told you. I have got through six volumes and shall finish it. I love it, its exquisite lucidity and the delicacy of its humour, delicate as a breath. Nothing is hammered into you. It is lost now, this humour of Addison and Steele. I love the slow pages and pages 'without an idea in them' as culture tells me. Wouldn't I rather sit and smoke my pipe with Steele at Wills's coffee-house than listen to Mr. Bernard Shaw? I love the escape from problems, the sweet un-malevolent criticism on men and women, the gentle laughter at their follies, even at the hoops of the women. In my father's house, in what was called the 'drawing-room', stood a tall black book-case with gilt lines on it. The *Spectator* was there. I never read it, of course, as a boy, but I read it afterwards, and now it has unaccountably disappeared and I have had to buy another which does not smell like the first.

I went over to Hartfield yesterday to see Nancy Paul in her new cottage. She moved on Wednesday. I found Rose, Dorothy Cholmeley, and her father there. Everything was in a muddle, but we managed to get some lunch. It is a beautiful place. Mr. Cholmeley has lent me Freeman's *Schools of*

Hellas which I much want to read. It is on ancient Greek education (*new*, mind you). Another small book he gave me on Roman Religion,¹ before it was affected by Greek influences, I found so stimulating that I read it twice and shall go through it a third time (*new* also). Then an Oxford young man, a friend of Erica Storr, has sent me with high recommendation Munro's *Gilian the Dreamer* which I have begun (*new* again). Finally I have read half, in manuscript, of Mrs. Cobden-Sickert's unpublished novel. I am really a most modern person.

Most affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

47.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

8 October 1907.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

I return Miss ——'s letter. Father Tyrrell I have not followed lately. Theological fencing is not very interesting. I foresaw some time ago that Tyrrell could not give me anything valuable, and so I left him alone. I am rather surprised Miss —— cares so much for Jowett. He was no scholar: his Plato is very inaccurate: he was a shirker of difficulties, not in Greek only, failing you always at the point when clear distinction was required. People called him a traitor because he remained in the Church, but he had no convictions outside

¹ *The Religion of Ancient Rome*, by Cyril Bailey, 1907.

it, and his so-called thinking is a sloppy mess of words. I have much more respect for the Pope.

Miss Horace Smith came to lunch last week. She was staying near us with a friend. . . . She is thirty years old, High Church (but a friend of —), reads little, and spends her time and energy on her schools. I went a little way for a walk with her, and found that her ignorance of literature was not a defect. Literature might have spoilt her. It might have substituted somebody else's way of looking at things for her own, and her own is well worth preserving, for she does really *look*. A consequence of this peculiarity is a certain unexpectedness in what she says. This is evident in her book. I hope some day she will come again, and by that time you and I, perhaps, may be able to compare notes.

We heard some violin and piano duets, Mozart and Beethoven, very well played at a friend's house in Tunbridge Wells last week. The Mozart I did not know. It was wonderful ; pure beauty.

Miss Jenkinson has been in trouble. She has lost her younger brother, not the one at Cambridge, but Major Jenkinson. Nobody knew what was the matter with him till the post-mortem, when an abscess in the brain was found which could not have been reached. It was evident, however, for some time before death that he could not live, and Miss Jenkinson put off telling her father, dreading the shock. She is a wise woman, and she may have thought there was a chance of recovery, but if I had

been her father I should not have liked the concealment. How difficult it is really to know some people! I have always been able to see that Miss Jenkinson was intelligent beyond the ordinary standard and I liked her ways, but she moved in society above mine and, notwithstanding her ease of manner, she always protected herself with that delicate veil of reserve which I suppose is necessary to those who have much to do with the world. During the last two or three years we have been more intimately acquainted, and I find she is affectionate, sensitive, and at heart quite free from the fetters of custom.

. . . I have sent you a copy of the *Athenaeum* of last week, in which there is a notice by me of a French book.¹ Please return it to me. You will not care much for the subject, nor do I *very* much, but my duty now is to occupy myself. Above everything, occupation! There is a little more for me to do since we have had two women servants instead of a man and wife. The man who comes in the evening does nothing but pump water, clean knives and boots, &c.

Most affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

. . . What does — mean by the 'newer cognition of the Universe'? Is it correct to set down Leslie Stephen as 'the child of the sixties and

¹ This is evidently the review in the *Athenaeum* of 5 October of Professor d'Istria's edition of Spinoza's *Ethique*.

early seventies'? That time including Carlyle, Ruskin, Tennyson, Rossetti, Swinburne, Mazzini, Pre-Raphaelitism, &c., &c., was surely more ideal than 1907.

Do tell me about the 'newer cognition'. The report of such a discovery is exciting. I am always asking younger people than myself for news of the spiritual world. I was told the other day to read Nietzsche (is this spelt right?). Have you read him? I have not, but I have a kind of presentiment that his 'newer cognition' would do me no good.

48.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

25 January 1908.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

Mabel has once more come and has once more gone. Her last night with us was bad and we tried to keep her here, but it was of no use and she went to Ashted. I was glad to hear she got better there. Her enthusiasm for Mr. Lloyd is happily unabated. She said to me with delightful innocence and frankness: 'Guy is an admirable critic and always right. He is so modest that he will sit silent for an hour while other people in the room are talking about a subject which he understands and they do not.' I did not laugh, nor did I laugh when I was by myself. I loved her all the more because she felt this to be true and did not

mind asserting it to be true. Is it not truer than our judgements on people generally are? Do we not generally err on the wrong side rather than on the right?

I cannot imagine what you mean when you say in your last letter to me that 'it is so impossible to me to be true', although you admit you 'cannot be glibly false'. It has always seemed to me that you have a peculiar power to convict of insincerity. You take us by the shoulders with a 'what you tell me is not a reality and is not you', and no more wholesome office can a human being fill. If I thought I could persuade you I would go on pegging away at you to get you to do what I want. The great thing is to begin without any intention of composing something connected or big. Couldn't you just set down the next day what you said to your Ashted people the day before? Don't bother yourself with corrections; don't write with anybody before your eyes; don't use an important looking manuscript book, but rather odd envelopes or at best odd half sheets; shove them in a drawer and send six months of them to me. I will look after them.

I have begun my periodical reading of the Bible. I now omit some parts, but I have to be careful, for by omission I may pass over what has always been precious. For example, there is the 26th chapter of Leviticus, the trial for jealousy in the 5th chapter of Numbers, the stripping of

Aaron on Mount Hor and his death there. These passages are just to be left without comment, no speech is adequate. I have been struck more than ever with the repetition without tautology in the noblest and *most pregnant* parts of the Old Testament. There is *no* tautology in it and yet continual recurrence. There is no tautology in a thunderstorm: the storm does not and cannot exhaust itself in a single flash or peal. Real tautology is poverty of meaning, and mere verbal tautology is of little consequence. 'If ye walk contrary unto me. . . . And if by these things ye will not be reformed unto me, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you. . . . And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me, then will I walk contrary unto you in fury; and I also will chastise you seven times for your sins.' This is Hebrew prose, not poetry.

Two or three of the Blake drawings I knew, as they are in Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*. It is difficult for me to think anything satisfactory to myself about him. The largest part of his poetry is dark to me, and also, I believe, to everybody. At the exhibition of his pictures last year there were many quite incomprehensible and not one with a beautiful face. On the other hand, he continually slips out of his obscurity into perfect imagery of subtler truth than has perhaps been expressed by any other painter or poet. What he sees he also says

without qualification or reserve. The best criticism on him which I know is Raleigh's *Introduction* to the *Lyrical Poems* and Swinburne's Essay on Blake.

Mr. ——— and his wife have been here. He told me that he forbore, when he was at ———, to say anything about his defection from the creeds until his last sermon, when he explained his reasons for leaving. One of his parishioners . . . then sent him £100 to pay the expense of moving, adding that the sermon was a statement of his own belief.

The enclosed slip you need not return.¹ I will not let myself loose on it. The brilliant reviewer might have added Homer, Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, to say nothing of the four gospels. I wish I could give up all newspapers and reviews. They do me no good.

... Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

The slip is from the *Times*, 10 January 1908. 'Ruskin has been dead more than seven years, and a generation is growing up which knows nothing of his personality, and to which his violent struggles with public opinion are but as the faint rumble of a storm now almost past the horizon. In what sense can the men and women of this generation be said to be under Ruskin's influence? Is his message still for them a living message? There can be but one answer, that his influence has inevitably waned, like that of Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Carlyle, because it strikes no longer with direct impact upon a world which has assimilated so much of it and also has outgrown so much of it.' Opposite these names he has put three exclamation marks and 'Note the jumble'.

49.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
19 July 1908.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

A sad misunderstanding ! I thought you knew all about it and did not wish to say anything. There is nobody from whom I wanted a word on this strange event more than from yourself. For indeed it is very strange, almost without precedent, I should say.

I cannot well speak of it in a letter, but there are one or two things I must tell you. That there is but little chance of marriage is a great trial, but the reasons against it seem insuperable to both of us, and they are not all summed up in the fact that I am seventy-six.

. . . When Dorothy found out how the case stood between us she instantly explained it to every one in her family, shutting out all possible misconception. It was a surprise to me and a delight to receive from them most affectionate letters. Mr. and Mrs. Horace Smith have welcomed me to Beckenham, although they understand my position, and they tell me Dorothy has not been so happy for years. It would have been so natural of them to have objected.

. . . It has to be remembered that in Dorothy what you justly name the 'Eternal' is supreme. I do not mean merely the religion which she so

earnestly believes, but what, for want of a better word, I call ideas or the ideal. . . . As to what I have called her religion, I could say much to you, but not in the compass of a letter. It is her own, and I am much, much closer to it than many people, *not* you, would suppose, and have been all my life.

I cannot write any more. Thank you a thousand times, my dear friend of so many years. The blessing which has been sent has been sent not as I should have ordered it, but nevertheless there is a wealth in it I shall not exhaust. An unexpected, totally unexpected apparition, as most blessings are! Little did I dream what was coming when you recommended *Miss Mona* to me and I heard that the authoress was going to call at the Cottage. In five minutes it was settled for both of us, although nothing was said.

You can speak about the matter to anybody who knows us and will not misconceive.

Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

I should like you to see the *Nation* of 11 July.¹ The title is not mine and is stupid. It was too bad of the editor to alter my own title without any reference to me. Mrs. Milford, I dare say, has a copy if you are not continuing it.

¹ See the *Groombridge Diary*, p. 63 note.

50.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

1 August 1908.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

To hold your tongue when you are not well is the right rule, but sometimes it causes misunderstanding. When you were here an enemy was approaching whom I had not seen for years, and I hoped he had left me for ever. He is the only enemy I really dread. Since you left he has gripped me. There is nothing to be done but to wait and be silent. In addition, with no connexion, however, with the other trouble . . . I have been twice examined by the X-rays and have to undergo another examination on Monday next. I understand that the result will probably not be very serious. So much in order that you may not misconceive the reason for my unhappiness.

You do not wonder now why I was instantly captured by Dorothy. Why she was taken in any way with me I honestly do not know. I did not press myself upon her. I should have thought it wrong to do so. . . . When you come to know her more intimately you will be amazed at her spiritual eagerness, coupled with an intense love of life and its pleasures. . . . Her inability to see that she can possibly be misunderstood is singular, but I notice that when she is in company she never hammers at an explanation of any of her opinions or criticisms.

She leaves them just as they first presented themselves to her. Above everything, *no reconciliations*. As a rule, she is not misunderstood, certainly by none of her friends who know her. 'Just the sort of thing Dorothy would do' said one. . . .

I want to move, not altogether to get nearer Beckenham, but because there is no life in this shut-in Cottage. Molly continues weak. She declares she is not unwilling to leave. . . .

Good-bye for the present, my very dear friend. I have written about nothing but myself and what concerns me, but there is nobody else to whom I can be so selfish. Dorothy came back from Ashstead enthusiastic for you. I believe, in fact I am sure, that I stood higher with her because I loved you.

W. HALE WHITE.

51.

18 North Parade,
Southwold, Suffolk.
13 September 1908.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

Molly and I came here on Friday. It is a pleasant, unspoilt little town, surrounded by wide-spreading heaths and commons, which are dotted over with grand churches. It is true Suffolk, Suffolk faces, Suffolk fields, Suffolk rivers and a yellow sea. I feel that I am really in a sweet, wholly agricultural country, not a semi-suburb like

Groombridge. I had been ailing there for two or three months, and trust the change will pull me together a bit.

Molly returned from Cornwall a new creature. Partly this was due to the place, but more than anything, I believe, to the gay, intelligent society in which she lived. Dorothy brought her home and spent a fortnight with us. Dorothy has now begun her class, club, and social work again, and as it is very exhausting, as she does it, she will have to rest when she can, and I doubt if we shall see as much of one another as we should both like.

I was so provoked a little while ago by a criticism on Christina Rossetti . . . that I determined to say a word about her. But I was not up to the mark. The author . . . assumed that because much of her poetry was religious it was worthless. I say religion has nothing to do with the value of poetry. The question is whether it is a noble expression of a particular faith, and not whether the faith is true according to the standard of truth set up in Church, Chapel or Hall of Science to-day. I also say that nobody can judge properly the poetry of a religion unless he is inside it. Christina, to my mind and to my ear, is wonderful. The matter is great; she often reaches the purely universal, and her metre and melodies are as musical as Swinburne's. Webb tells me that Maria, the Dante scholar, was delightful. He used to sit on the floor at the head of the sofa on which she lay so ill and listen to her

talk. She said the explanation of the severity of the punishments in the Hell was the sharpness of Dante's division between right- and wrong-doing. No muddling up of good and evil with him.

. . . Good-bye, my dear friend. I could write much, much more to you, but I must stop.

Most affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

52.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

1 November 1908.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Your letter came this morning. I will put down one or two words in reply now, lest I should forget them. I am in bed, and the doctor came three times yesterday, once at midnight to give relief the nurse could not give. Then morphia.

I want to say that your letters and Dorothy's are the only real letters I get. It is remarkable that although you have read so much you owe so little to books, indeed almost nothing, and this is the reason why you are such a help. It is difficult perhaps to understand why the originality of experience should give it such power, why the greatest thinking and deepest emotion of any author passed through your mind, expressed by you, does not touch me like the recital of that which you yourself have undergone, but it does

not. I believe I could explain this fact if I had a little more strength to disentangle what lies before me in a knot.

It is no good 'prating about a future life'. It *is* prating. I have dim notions of what *may* be, and seem to have reached certain negative conclusions; also to possess a kind of half-faith, but it all becomes nothingness when I try to put it into words. I am no better than the commonest mortal, and against the thought of parting with you and Dorothy and Molly I have no defence and break down. Molly, since this attack began, has been most tender with me, so unconsciously tender. I am so thankful that I chopped down my evil temper, which would have embittered our lives for no principle whatever.¹ Why do I find a kind of luxury in cruel words I do not mean?

Over against the almost unbearable anguish of separation I set Sleep, Forgetfulness for ever. But I will stop; not too soon. Observe there is

¹ This refers to a certain hardly disguised and characteristic tendency to dominate his daughter's friendships, with which Miss Partridge evidently taxes him from time to time. He had written two years before: 'I obey your counsel and show no jealousy, although there is much to which I am not admitted.' The sentence in the letter above—another of those not by any means rare instances of his strong instinct for the practical, clear-cut actualization of principles, thoughts, and theories (e.g. 'With increase of reading', *More Pages from a Journal*, p. 260; and 'How often when I discover', *Last Pages*, p. 260)—seems to me specially valuable as it lies there in its nakedness of *fact*. For the sentence following compare also *Last Pages*, p. 279, 'Why should we take', &c.

no *answer*. One can only reply by saying something else which is not relevant.¹

53.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

22 February 1909.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

I do not write because I have a worthy reply to your last letter, but because I do not wish you to think pain and weakness have blotted out the memory of you. Ah ! they must be intense indeed to do that ! What you say about — is only partly true. I am entirely to blame. The constancy and acuteness of the suffering make me demand a sympathy which nobody can give. I think of nothing but myself, and if other people are not always thinking of me, I am disappointed.

I send you an extract from a letter from Edward Browne to his father Sir Thomas.² I pronounce it

¹ Here this pencilled letter ends abruptly and without signature.

² The extract enclosed is as follows : ' If it was possible to get an opportunity to send as often as I am desirous to write, you should hear more often from me, being now so near the grand action, from which I would by no means be absent. I extremely long for that thundering day : wherein I hope you shall hear we have behaved ourselves like men, and to the honour of our country. I thank you for your directions for my ears against the noise of the guns, but I have found that I could endure it ; nor is it so intolerable as most conceive, especially when men are earnest, and intent upon their business, unto whom muskets sound but like pop-guns. It is

one of the noblest pieces of English prose I ever read. Partly this may be due to circumstances, but not altogether.

. . . Your ever affectionate,
W. HALE WHITE.

54.

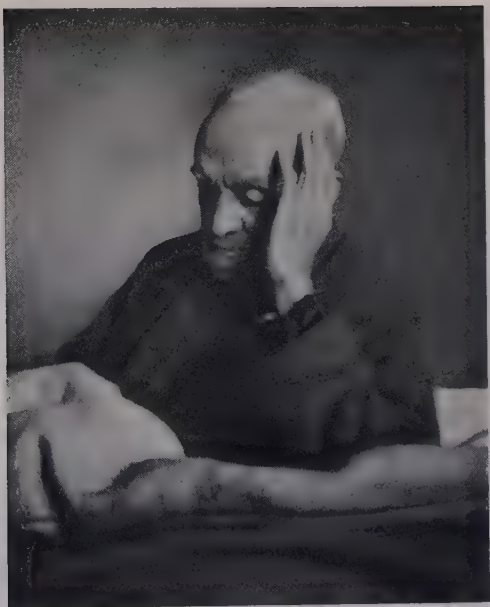
The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
24 March 1909.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I owe you a letter. I have put off writing, partly because writing is not easy to me and partly because, shut up in my room, unable to do anything save brood, the most unwholesome of all occupations, I have nothing to say to you which will do you the slightest good. I can, it is true, read a little, but I cannot pursue what I read. I manage perhaps to take in the meaning of the page, but I am quite passive.

Dorothy comes from Beckenham every now and then for half a day. She is coming to-morrow, and we are going over the revises of her new book together. . . . Although I know her well I never see her, if she talks seriously, without feeling that I know little of her. She continually, almost every time I meet her, breaks down some limit and totally

impossible to express unto another how a smart sea-fight elevates the spirits of a man, and makes him despise all dangers. In and after all sea-fights, I have been very thirsty.' See the *Groombridge Diary*, p. 144.



WILLIAM HALE WHITE

aetate circ. 78

upsets some classification which I had assigned to her. It is of no use for me to calculate on any judgement she will pronounce or to try to pre-adapt myself to what I conjecture she will be. I must just be myself and take the consequences. In religion this unexpectedness in her is very remarkable. She, in a way, is High Church, but if I were to try to meet her by sympathy with some High Church doctrine I should find myself all wrong and should know it. I should enjoy being present when you two were together. I would listen without interruption. It is a sorrow to me that now she, and indeed all my friends are not what they ought to be to me. I have not strength to make enough of them or love them properly. They are not sufficiently indispensable to me.

But no more in this mood. I should have waited if I had been able to foresee happiness or even peace.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

55.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
5 September 1909.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

I am writing in bed and you will not therefore expect much. I must, however, thank you for the trouble you have taken in answering ——'s letter.

I have no news to tell you. A bedroom month after month is not the place for news worth repeating. I will say once for all that if I improve I improve very slowly, and am often wellnigh beaten by pain and especially by depression.¹

Dorothy comes every week to see us. I say 'us', for Molly loves her and she loves Molly. . . . As to myself, she is of great service to me by her gaiety of heart, by her genius, but above everything by her care for me. Why she should take any notice of such a wreck as I am I cannot understand. I say this with perfect sincerity. The best part of her work is perhaps her Bible Class, not merely the exposition of the Bible, but her training of her young men, acting as umpire or scorer in their football and cricket matches and looking after their lives weekdays as well as Sundays. This gives a reality in the minds of her class to her religious teaching.

I do wish I could see you. I am almost shut out from my friends. I cannot be with anybody for more than half an hour at a time, but that half-hour often helps me.

Your old and much loving friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

Dorothy is hardly ever here at the end or

¹ On the top of the next page he has written. 'Lander makes Aesop say to Rhodope. "Glory to the man who rather bears a grief corroding his breast, than permits it to prowl beyond, and to prey on the tender and compassionate!" An apt text for me.'

beginning of the week. She is not here now. I will give her your message when I see her. I suppose you have met her mother. She is a delightful person, and every now and then I get a really wonderful letter from her revealing strange depths. . . .

56.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
4 November 1909.
Posted on 5th.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

Yesterday and to-day I have been possessed by a desire to write to you—with so much to say, and yet, now that I put pencil to paper, I find that I can do nothing but ask you to shake hands. Well, that is good and I do shake hands, and I look up and can see your face almost as distinctly as if you were here.

I wish you could come and stay with me for two or three days. I cannot propose you should sleep in Nurse's room, but when Molly returns (she is just going away for a day or two) I shall try with your permission to make some arrangement. There is a very comfortable bed to be had close by. Perhaps with the help of that we could manage without much suffering. I want to hear you talk about Henry Sidgwick's *Memoir*. It has been lent to me by one of his friends, and I have no doubt

you have read it. It is very interesting and very provocative. Sidgwick lived all his life at Cambridge, amongst a number of brilliant men, and everything becomes a subject on which to exercise and sharpen their wits. Religion is not a necessity, a passion or an interpretation, but an intellectual exercise.¹ In one of his letters Sidgwick says that he is dissatisfied with his moral position, and he therefore desires a creed which would strengthen it (orthodoxy, restraint of a belief in hell, for example?), but he has found that a wilful determination to believe for the sake of advantages destroys what is best in us. A curious attitude—*weighing* his religion! Imagine these literary, clever people discussing over coffee or wine the value of the mediatorial idea or what substitute can be provided for the supernatural as a sanction for law!

I am going on slowly. The disease is not acute, but strength does not come and dejection resists all attempts to conquer it. Miss Saint has lent me a bath-chair, and I went out in it on one perfect day, the more wonderful because of the gloom which had preceded it. I did my best to banish all thought of darkness and live in what was before me, but my damnable temper prevailed.² Sidgwick

¹ See *Last Pages from a Journal*, p. 316.

² See *Groombridge Diary*, 2 November. 'Stupendous struggles' indeed, but not so very 'damnable'. . . . 'He looked at the green crops in the autumn-sown field with much pleasure.'

suffered much from this convincing evidence of the existence of a Devil. It is a relief to me [to] find I am not singular. I must say Sidgwick is a delightful creature, so simple, such a lover of everything good, spreading out feelers in all directions after it, so sympathetic with all people in whom he found any trace of it, never cynical, never affected or smart and, what is especially noteworthy, consenting quietly to the established order of the universe, holding his tongue in extremity. How glad I should have been to have had him for a friend here in Groombridge! I did not know or, if I did ever know, I had forgotten that he had so completely broken loose from the Church. . . .

Good-bye.

Your constant and most affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

A shamefully ragged letter. It is written with difficulty in bed. Please excuse me.

57.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

27 April 1910.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

I do not like to feel I am cut off from you and the world in which you live, and perhaps if I write to you I shall get a letter in reply. The sort of letter I want is one which will tell me as much as possible about yourself.

As to *my* self the only news I have relates to my body, which has almost usurped entirely the kingdom of my soul. The worst effect of a sickness like mine is that life is hardly anything more than a record of sensations. But last Friday I was thankful to discover that I was still responsive, if only a little, to something beyond mortality. You know that Newton is supposed to have demonstrated beyond doubt that white light is made up of the prismatic colours; that the prism, in fact, decomposes white light. Goethe devoted a great deal of time and energy to this subject, and thought his *Theory of Colours* of more importance than all his poetry. He was fiercely attacked and denounced. The scientific men down to our own day have been unanimously against him. 'What could a poet know about physics? How dare anybody dispute the authority of the high priest?'

But last Friday I read a paper by Silvanus Thompson in which he said that the men of science, including Lord Rayleigh, were coming round to the belief that Goethe in his main contention was right. Am I not delighted? White light then is simple, pure, an original un-compounded emanation, and the poet it is who has seen the truth.

I wish very much I could see you. My nurse, I am afraid, is permanent, but I am sure we could manage somehow to give you half a room.

I don't know if you have heard me speak of a Roman Catholic friend, Mrs. Hubert Burke. She

recommended me to read a story by a friend of hers, Mrs. Wilfrid Ward. It is called *Great Possessions*. I make it a rule never to recommend a book, and I therefore say simply that this book to me was *good*. I enjoyed living for a few days amongst people so different from any I knew. I liked to see Roman Catholicism from the inside.

Dorothy comes for part of each week. Her Beckenham work is very absorbing, and I believe she is repaid, though the seed comes up very slowly and, more often than not, dies: Molly is well. They both send their love.

Very affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

58.

'Gale', Chelwood Gate,
Uckfield.

4 June, 1910.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

Alas, an exposition of the nature of light and of Goethe's discovery would take up a volume, and, what is more to the point, I do not know enough to satisfy the simplest inquiries. The first *questions* on almost every subject always show me I know next to nothing; that nothing has been really examined.

The time during which I have been fit for reading has been given up to Mill's *Letters*,

the most strangely interesting book I have come across for years. It is not so much his theories on what are called 'social subjects' which attract me as his passion, his thoroughness, his erect attitude to his friends, never bending to humour them; a remarkable, and, I should say, a unique combination. He is not profound, but he is original; he is not Christian, nor even a Theist, but never was a man more religious in one legitimate use of the word, his reverence for his wife. What God is, even to true Christians, she was to him. She served the purpose of a God to him.

We are staying at Lady Robert Cecil's country cottage. We were introduced to her by Dorothy soon after I was ill, and she seems to have taken a fancy to us, for when she found I could not follow the doctor's advice and go away from home, she insisted on lending us this house. It is in a lovely situation on Ashdown Forest. Our party includes Dorothy (for part of the week), Molly, Nurse and myself.

I recover very slowly. I can never regain, I am afraid, anything but a small portion of my strength, nor ought I to expect it. People talk about submission, but we do not know what it means till we are face to face with the fact. . . .

I am trying to scrape together for the benefit of my children all that I can recollect of my life from

my earliest childhood to my marriage.¹ How much is *wahrheit* and how much is *dichtung*? The afternoon and evening in and on the peace-fullest of rivers, the (to me) sacred Ouse! *Wahrheit* or *dichtung*? Both.

Your friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

Forgive all the scratching and corrections. At my time of life I cannot re-write just for appearance' sake.

59.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
16 July 1910.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

Here lies your letter of the 9th June waiting for an answer. I am not going to answer it now, for although it was so interesting that I read it two or three times, there is nothing in it which needs a reply. I will just tell you what has happened to me since the 9th June. Dorothy, Molly, Nurse and I went to Lady Robert Cecil's house and had royal entertainment. No bother with servants and everything provided, except meat and drink, even cigarettes and note-paper. It is in a wonderful situation, between 600 and 700 feet above sea-level. Lady Robert has been

¹ *The Early Life of Mark Rutherford*, 1913.

here this week. Very brilliant, witty, intelligent, and withal, very simple, but, alas, stone deaf.

By taking my nurse with me I managed to spend last Friday to Tuesday at the Horace Smiths. I went to Dorothy's class and heard her speak extempore for half an hour. . . . As to the matter I will swear there was not in London that Sunday evening a truer, more suggestive exposition of text or chapter in the Bible, or one more devoutly religious.

She has sent down here her own piano which belongs to her study, and she has been playing Scarlatti and Corelli to me, wonderful music which I had never heard before—such melodies! Then Bach, whom I now understand, because, as a musical person expressed it to me, he is properly 'phrased', and, understanding him, I am astonished.

I do so wish I could see you. You know how we are situated. We have a double-bedded room, and Nurse would sleep at her own house from Saturday to Monday, if you prefer the room to yourself. She will do this willingly.

Ever affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

Let me hear soon. You must be prepared for a garden which makes me melancholy, a perpetual frustration of all efforts, apparent victory to-day but resurrection to-morrow in full vigour.

60.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
11 October 1910.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

Your letter about Dorothy's papers has been a help to me.¹ It shows me that your mind is much more expansive than mine. You can include things which I cannot. This fixity of a standard is apt to be a curse. I own that there was much in those papers which I was unable to appropriate. Now I see that the reason is my own rigidity and narrowness. This admission is a great gain.

I never saw any class conducted in the way in which Dorothy conducts hers; with such a *confusion*, to use your own words, of the Divine and human. She stands on a low platform . . . and *talks* her lesson easily and earnestly, illustrating it with familiar parables. She quietly shuts her Bible when she has finished, goes to the piano, asks her class what hymns they would like, and when the singing is finished, comes down and speaks to her lads as she passes through them to

¹ He had already written one long letter to Miss Partridge about these papers. They were short, half-humorous, half-serious, chapters about my Class and Club. I put them aside and subsequently wrote (for him) *Twelve years with my Boys* which suited him a great deal better, and I have no doubt he was right. But it will easily be seen that criticism could not be entirely dispassionate.

the church. Some of them follow her, and two or three always walk home with her when the service is over. . . .

I wish that I myself could sympathize more completely with her attitude to these young men. They are mostly rough, barbarian hobbledehoyes and their freedoms try my temper. But arguing is foolish and wrong. How can reasoning change diverse ways of looking at things? There is one passage in your letter which I felt very much, that is to say the necessity of standing room for her. There is no doubt a very real danger in restriction, and the more gifted and earnest the person whom we seek to restrict, and the stronger the love, the greater the peril. I can imagine few situations more likely to end in disaster than the abandonment through love alone of a conviction lying near the heart. I am afraid I often go wrong in pressing something of my own upon her with which she does not agree. She seldom yields, but it is not right that her path should be made so difficult. I think that when a certain mode of action is the consequence of a given character, all of a piece with it, we should if possible accept it. We do not know what harm we may do by mutilation. The value of an action depends upon its being a part of a whole. All this and much more has been the education due to Dorothy. I am beginning to learn. It is a wonderful thing to be under the tuition of life rather than of learning and to be

perpetually surprised by strange reversals of customs, doctrines, conventions and creeds. All these reversals by her are original and instantly justify themselves.

Her subtlety is remarkable and she never explains. If she did, of course she would spoil what she was doing.

. . . Thank you again. I have put your letter in the bundle 'Letters to be preserved'.¹

I am better than I was months ago, but I am weak and disheartened by relapses.

Most affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

61.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
22 January 1911.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

It came into my head, I do not know why, that I would send you the enclosed letter for the sake of the last paragraph. I make no comment. I really cannot tell you why I send it. Let me have it back. The writer,² as you know, was a friend of Father Tyrrell's, but she did not follow him in his revolt. Nevertheless we get on very well together. She never attempts conversion.

You added five notes of exclamation to my belief that jealousy is a natural attendant on true

¹ Not to be found.

² Mrs. Hubert Burke.

love, and you doubt whether I really believe it. Indeed I do. Shakespeare knew something about men and women, and he wrote the *Winter's Tale* and *Othello*. Perhaps you will admit the probability of such jealousy as that of Leontes and the Moor. Is it not remarkable that he who was 'perplexed in the extreme', he who swore that

to deny each article with oath
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception
That I do groan withal

should have been the calm unshakable hero to whom instant appeal was made in terror? 'Opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you.' Of course it did.

I hope you are well. If you are well I am sure you are happy. I am much about as I was when you last heard from me. We have had a spell of unexampled, dark, *uniformly* clouded weather. Molly and Dorothy, I am sure, would send their love if they were here.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

62.

The Cottage,
Groombridge.
5 February 1911.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . It was interesting to me to hear what you said about Florence Burke. She is a passion-

ately sincere Catholic. I have had another letter from her telling me what she did at Candlemas, but it would be sacrilege not to keep it secret. I am always glad that Tyrrell did not confuse her. I think you would admit (I am sure I do) that at any rate the symbolism of Catholicism, as for example at Candlemas, is sometimes expressive of deeper truth than anything that can be put into words. Catholicism herein shows profounder insight than Protestantism into the nature of truth and of man. Catholicism knows what words cannot do. Protestantism struggles to put everything into words. The vital part of religion is wordless and purely symbolic.

Your affectionate friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

63.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
22 February 1911.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

Please excuse pencil. Two of my fingers are disabled with what the doctor calls gout.

. . . I have read lately a most remarkable anonymous novel entitled *Martha Vine*. I am told it is by a girl of two-and-twenty, a daughter of Mrs. Meynell. It has many youthful defects. There is no story; the characters develop, not in dialogue or by circumstance, but in the comments

of the author, and many persons are introduced who have no connexion with the chief *dramatis personae*, but the English is singularly sweet and pure, free from all paradox, topsy-turvyism, ambition to strike or smite, and from journalistic taint. The genius is most remarkable, displaying itself in maturity of wisdom and subtlety of discrimination and perception. It is the story of the love of a man well worth study, for a woman well worth study, and the author shows extraordinary skill in the manner in which she makes the loves—and repulsions too—of the different attributes of these two complex human beings act and re-act on each other. She is so patient in watching the process, so earnest over it ! To her there is nothing in this world which can be more interesting, and she is right.

I wonder what you would say to *Martha Vine*. I find I have to be very slow over it, and I was obliged to read it twice before I saw what it was worth. The general opinion, I fancy, is that it is intolerably 'dull'. Well, it may be, but to some of us *Clarissa Harlowe* is not dull and Dumas' novels *are*. It depends. Good-bye. Molly and Dorothy are with Dorothy's father and mother at Beckenham. A party for the theatre had been got up.

Your most affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

I was told, being rather silent when they went

away and I was about to be left with Nurse, that I ought to be capable of such 'altruism' as to whistle and sing just as if I were going myself. Don't you think this is demanding too much of poor human nature? Is it fair to expect me to rejoice in another's joy *exactly* as if it were my own?

64.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
8 April 1911.

Dorothy and I married this morning. . . . Will tell you more later on.

W. H. W.

65.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
16 April 1911.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

It is very kind of you to take so much trouble in your musical researches for me. Ever since I first read *Consuelo* I have tried to learn something about Porpora. The old music is now better known, and perhaps I stand a better chance of success. Dorothy has some marvellous giges, sarabandes, bourrées by Bach, and I really believe, if I did not interrupt them with stretches of music

by other composers, I should become unintelligible in my enthusiasm, although remaining perfectly sincere. Bach has a strange power over me, very strange. I suppose something has happened to me, articulately inexpressible, which he *accompanies*.

I have not seen *Marie* — ? ¹ I will try for it at the Library if you will send me a postcard giving me the other half of the title and the author's name. *Martha Vine* is, I believe, to be obtained as a surplus copy now. The authoress is coming here again in a few days. She has sent me some Verses she has written and published. They are delicately mystical and Catholic, but a little obscure. I do not think she designedly tries to let obscurity pass for profundity, but I do think she prefers to stop short when she ought to go on. What a mistake it is to be afraid of lucidity !

We have been racking our brains to get a spare bed for S. S. P. into our crowded cottage, and I do believe we shall succeed.

. . . You never saw anything like our banks this year. The daffodils have come up in masses, which lie scattered here and there on the miniature heights of the back garden. People coming from Tunbridge Wells stop to admire that slope from the road up to the wood. I do not wonder.

Best love from the three of us.

W. HALE WHITE.

¹ This must be *Marie Claire*, much talked of at that time.

May 1911

291

66.

'Gale', Chelwood Gate,
Uckfield.

13 May 1911.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

I was glad for more reasons than one that you came here.¹ You are able now to see how things stand with us, and also that the marriage is not an inexplicable mystery at which people can do nothing but hold up their hands and turn their eyes heavenward. . . .

When we were sitting in the garden you said something to me which I imperfectly understood about neglect of which I had been guilty. I don't know what it could have been, unless it was that I did not tell you earlier about the marriage. We were not able to tell anybody until about a week beforehand, for we did not really come to a final conclusion till then, and the day was not fixed till so late that we barely succeeded in getting the licence. There is, truthfully, nobody in this world whose confidence I would have sought sooner than yours. Long, long affection, sympathy and admiration would have compelled me. Please, by the way, tell me what you mean precisely in your letter to Dorothy by the warning 'not to work too hard at good spirits'. A dim fear of something of this kind has occasionally laid hold of me.

¹ Lady Robert Cecil had lent us her cottage again, and Miss Partridge stayed with us there.

We had a magnificent thunderstorm here the day before yesterday. I stood at the window and watched the lightning plunging downwards, quivering with beautiful, awful earnestness. I thought of *Pippa Passes*.

. . . Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

Ah! how true it is what you say about the reformation which would follow if we had the courage to be happy in our own way! The misery of it is that we don't know what our own happiness is, and will obstinately persist in trying to adopt the happiness of other people, or, most likely, something which is not their happiness.

67.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

11 February 1912.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

You do not know how grateful I am that you are getting better. You will live to come here again and supersede the memory of the last dark days at Groombridge.¹

I am on my back with obstinate rheumatism which nothing that the doctor can give me will abate, and I am very desponding about it. Hands

¹ Miss Partridge, who came to us in the autumn of 1911, suffering, as was supposed, from a bad form of indigestion, was taken very ill with heart trouble, and for some time could not be moved. She remained permanently invalided.

and feet are much swollen. I am trying to read Inge's book on Faith. It is bold and suggestive, but in my present condition faith does not seem of much consequence. I cannot write any more. Love to all at home. Most affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.

68.

The Cottage,

Groombridge, Kent.

22 February 1912.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

Those portraits are absorbingly interesting, and yet I cannot quite understand what makes them so. Behind those unmoved features what passions, what jealousies are in ambush! This accounts partly for much of the fascination: partly also it is, of course, Holbein's art, and partly it is *pity*.

I do not think the Windsor photograph¹ is the one I saw at the Tudor Exhibition. but it is wonderful.

¹ The 'Windsor photograph' is the portrait inscribed 'The Lady Mary, after Queen' in the Windsor Collection. This portrait, I learn, did appear in the Tudor Exhibition, 1890. Possibly the photograph did not do justice to the picture—Miss Partridge commented, 'He went to the wrong photographer'—but he was sufficiently puzzled to write to Mr. Sydney Cockerell a day or two later to ask if there were two Holbein portraits of Mary at Windsor: 'it is not quite the Mary who has haunted me.' Subsequently, I remember, he took a good deal of trouble to get a copy of this picture and had it framed.

I am thankful you are going on well. I am still crippled both in hands and feet.

Please thank Jo for the trouble she has taken.

With love.

Yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

69.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

3 July 1912.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

I was just about to begin a note to you when a card came from Molly, who is staying with Mabel, to say that she would see you to-day. I hope therefore to hear from her how you are, but if the weather should have prevented her visit I will ask you to send me a line. Perhaps by this time you will be able to use a deck-chair. When you last wrote you expected to try one.

I am wonderfully struck with the way in which you manage to get out of ordinary things, clouds, fresh air, all that is in them, or a good part of it (for who can extract a thousandth fraction?). When you are in perfect health, able to get about by train and see pictures and hear music, you may not pay much attention to a bit of sky over your garden, but now you will watch it for hours, and discover every few minutes new glories. There is a plain field at the back of our house, with a ring of trees round it, which has been a retreat a hundred times for me. It is continually new because I study it, far newer than Switzerland could possibly be.

I have read no very modern books lately, but I have gone through the *Faery Queen* once more, and am prepared more eagerly than ever to champion it against all fools—if indeed they were worth the breaking of a rush on their skulls. I have also nearly reached the end of *The Dawn in Britain* by that astonishing creature, Doughty. It is a blank verse poem in six volumes! Nevertheless it has not for a minute tired me. It has obvious defects, just those of the author's famous *Arabia Deserta*, but it has wonderful merits and they are unusual, rare merits, not a variation, continuance or exaggeration of qualities or merits customary in twentieth-century literature.

Our next-door neighbour lent us a motor-car last week, and Dorothy and I went to Ocklyc. Jenkinson was as well as I have ever seen him—memory, eyesight, hearing perfect, interest in affairs unabated, and strength sufficient to curse the Chancellor of the Exchequer most vigorously. His roses are still a wonder, and it is amusing to see this impetuous, violent creature tenderly lifting the head of a flower so that you may see its beauty. He is in his ninetieth year!¹

Dorothy sends her best love. So, of course, do I. Jeanie and Jo are included.

Always affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

¹ He climbed on a chair by the window during lunch, if memories may be trusted, in his wilful determination to catch the high note of the chiff-chaff.

Our old bent-to-the-ground syringa tree is a marvel this summer. It has to be propped up everywhere and tied with wire, but it is a mass of scented snow.

70.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
31 July 1912.

MY DEAR SOPHIE,

If you are able to write half a dozen words will you please let me know exactly what is the position now. You need not trouble yourself over a letter which you might imagine would be interesting to me. The interesting questions to me are whether your strength is increasing, whether you can get out of doors, whether you can eat and sleep, whether time hangs heavily, whether your spirits are upheld, and whether you can see friends. Can you listen to music? This is the last thing I myself can do if I am knocked over. Dorothy has been practising a concerto by Mozart which I can hardly stand. 'Divine' is really the right word for such celestial melodies. Heaven's High King does not, I am sure, lend His ear to more rapturous music.

It is very difficult to me to write.

We all three send our very best love.

Ever affectionately,
W. HALE WHITE.

LETTERS TO MR. PHILIP WEBB

[PHILIP WEBB, born 12 January 1831, died 17 April 1915.

My husband preserved a small bundle of Philip Webb's letters, but unfortunately very few of them are connected with those of his own preserved by Philip Webb. Put together they would hardly make a 'correspondence'. Here and there extracts from Mr. Webb's letters will be found in the foot-notes. He did not appear to value his own letters as 'literature'—'writing', so he puts it, 'for which I have no natural aptitude, and have never been taught'; but he can take the trouble to pen page after page about Morris's *Odyssey*, and Butcher and Lang, and about an introduction when in Venice to 'Sig. Giacomo Boni, who was directing the repairs to the Ducal Palace; and as a scaffolding was up there, I had the liberty of being on it for hours together, rubbing my fingers and almost my nose over the mouldings and carvings as if they were round soft babies that did not roar out and bellow'. And all this on Sunday, 19 Feb. 1888, because he has heard of his friend's illness,¹ and places himself 'at your service to give any little relief of cheerfulness that I may'.

Reference should be made to p. 40 of the *Groombridge Diary*.

D. V. W.]

1922

¹ See letters to Mrs. Colenutt, 30 November and 24 December 1887.

I.

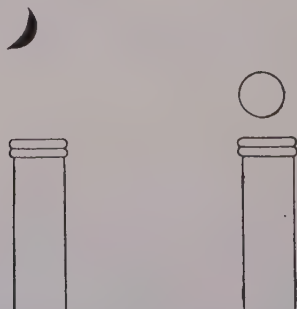
9 High Wickham, Hastings.

4 December 1894.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I don't know what you mean by your defect in 'lucidity'. If it were true and I were in your case, I should say with pride 'I know nothing about your cursed penny-a-liner facility and lucidity: any school-board child can acquire those doubtful arts. I can build a house and I can draw Herculean pillars'. But as I say, I don't follow you.

The view through the pillars is westwards. Ergo, the sun is setting: ergo, the moon which is setting must be a new moon, and as the moon's illuminated part is always turned towards the sun, the aspect of things would be this¹—



only I have made the light part of the crescent dark.

¹ The diagram is redrawn from my copy of the original, which is not now available for facsimile reproduction.

I will write again soon, after pondering over what you say. I thought you might be in a hurry about the celestial problem.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

2.

5 High Wickham, Hastings.
29 January 1899.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I had intended to write to you after reading a little more of *The Mirror of Perfection*.¹ I have but lately finished Sabatier's life of the Saint and was therefore in a measure prepared for the *Mirror*. It is very wonderful, wonderful to think that such things once actually were, and it is sad also to think that this republication of the *Mirror* is now nothing but literature. People will admire it, lounging in their chairs, but nobody will do what it ordains.

It is curious that at the same time I should be reading the verbatim reprint of Caxton's edition of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. I felt, from both these books, that to bring back—really—the Middle Ages is impossible. They are beyond us; completely (almost) outside us and unrealizable, and he who approaches them with any nineteenth-century intent will certainly mistranslate them. The same thing is true of Greece. A man named Verrall,

¹ St. Francis of Assisi.

a learned scholar, published a little while ago a long essay called *Euripides the Rationalist* in which he attempts to classify Euripides as a very witty agnostic, a cross between Voltaire and Huxley. Much that Mr. Verrall says is true, but on the whole he completely fails because he is dealing with somebody whose position is incomprehensible and who cannot be comprehended by forcing him head, tail and shoulders into a modern type. Euripides derides the popular mythology—*ergo*, he must be a scoffing blasphemer and so on ; demanding of the old Greek the obedience to the ' ifs ' and ' therefore ' of to-day.

I do trust you will pause before selecting Wales. I do not believe that the climate will suit you. It is too damp and too enervating, and it is too far away. What am *I* to do if you exile yourself two or three hundred miles ! I shall prowls about Raymond Buildings and wail like a tomcat left out of doors when the master and mistress have left and the house is shut up. My humble advice to you is to go on till you drop. It is much the safest plan. Strongest of all arguments ! At present I see you for two hours once every two months or thereabouts. If you retire, I might feel it impossible to prevent myself from settling at least within ten miles of you.

Molly sends her love.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

3.

C/o Miss Hine, Green Bushes.

Haslemere.

10 February 1899.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Thank you very much for your letter. . . .
Ah, yes, it is so much easier to invent than to learn !
I know a young man who has invented a Theory of
Life, but he cannot pass the lowest examination to
qualify him for practising as an apothecary, the
profession for which he is designed.

One sentence in your letter reminds me of your
ancient heresy that Millais had no imagination.
To me he is the *only* modern painter who has any
that is perfectly healthy, the only one who can
seize a dramatic position, whose pictures have
a point. Burne-Jones's pictures are collections of
various persons, and you don't know precisely why
they are brought together. But I pardon you.
You inevitably look at works of art as an artist,
and I as one of the people, to whom the subject is
of much consequence. Nevertheless the artist
should not work for the artist only and furthermore
he should be planted on the earth. The girls in
'Autumn Leaves' with their perfectly English
faces are better than Jones's type (for it is always
the same) of impossible spirituality. That you can
deny imagination and poetic unity to 'Autumn
Leaves' would be incomprehensible to me, were
you not, as I say, an artist.

Molly and I are here for a few days' change. She has not been well, and I fancied an outing might do her good. This region is still beautiful, but, alas, gentility has besmirched it. I am not so foolish as to object to people choosing to live in pleasant places, but I object to the obtrusive arrogance of their houses. Every one of them proclaims *pocket*.

Molly sends her love.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

4.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

14 June 1900.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . I want to know if you have taken the cottage in the Cotswolds. It is of no use to say how sorry I am over this scheme. I hope you won't be as sorry as I am, but I am afraid. I have looked about for cottages nearer home, but have not been successful. I saw one a few days ago which might have suited you, but you would not have liked the surroundings, and it was within a mile of a station. My experience, now pretty extensive, in searching for houses is that you don't find one unless you lodge in the neighbourhood for some weeks in which you mean to take up your abode. It is quite impossible also to say whether a house is inhabitable till you have tried it.

This place looked quiet. I inspected it several times and could hear nothing. But now I discover that a poor woman down the lane keeps a dog. She cannot be made to understand it ought not to be chained up all day. Every now and then it breaks out into fits of yelping and barking which last for hours. Do not, pray, commit yourself to the Cotswolds or any other wolds without experiment. I would give much if you could feel happy in being nearer Sussex. You say you have no money. I have scraped together a little bit, and would thankfully buy half an acre at Uckfield or Buxted or some untouched agricultural village, and you could put a cottage on it, for which also I would pay, and it would be an investment for me.

I have just lost my oldest living friend, aged 81.¹ I first knew him in 1849, and we have been very intimate ever since. His father and forefathers were farmers at the back of the Isle of Wight, a wonderfully large-limbed, strong-boned, tall race—Danes, he always used to say. His mother was close upon six feet, his brother is over six feet. I have heard him tell stories of the weekly journey to Newport market, starting at two in the morning. In winter time men went in front with lanterns and cast faggots in the ruts to prevent the wagons from sinking. He was a perfectly upright man in all his dealings, never swerving in word nor, what is more important, in deed from the truth.

¹ Mr. Colenutt.

He had also a kind of rocky, protecting strength in him, so that if you were in difficulty and were near him you felt sheltered. He went to no church nor chapel, and brought up his children on the same lines. He died of exhaustion following pneumonia, caught by trying to extinguish a fire in his garden one bitter night about three months ago. He lay for some time quite conscious, quite calm, and departed without a struggle. His wife is much after his pattern, but, as becomes a woman, a little softer and with a singularly swift and penetrating perception, outspeeding all masculine logic, of the true merits of any given case. What a gift that is! How often have I watched her as she in half a dozen words went straight to the mark, unhindered by arguments.

I mean what I say about building the cottage. You would be doing me a favour. Much better put £500 in such a venture than in Rand gold mines.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

5.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

26 August 1900.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I return the *Stealing of the Mare*.¹ It is a delightful story. It possesses the precious charm

¹ *The Celebrated Romance of the Stealing of the Mare*, translated by Lady Anne Blunt; done into verse by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, 1892.

of transportation into lands far removed from our modern, vulgar life.

Let me know when you have finally settled about Worth.¹

. . . I am thankful you are not going to the Cotswolds. It seems absurd in me to give you any advice about a house, but, as the result of much experience, let me beseech you to provide for *warmth*. You will find the difference great between your room with only one outside wall and your cottage. Warmth, warmth, is the one thing (almost) needful to me now that I am hard upon threescore and ten. Have you got a thick ulster sort of coat for use indoors? I bought some hand-woven greyish stuff from a lady who has land in the Shetlands, and got a little tailor to make it up for me into a garment which comes down to my feet. Never was money better laid out. Not all the tailors in Bond Street could have served me so well. If you have not got anything of the kind I will send you patterns.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

6.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

31 August 1900.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . The other day I rescued a spaniel

¹ Worth, near Crawley, Sussex, where, in a cottage which he called 'Caxtons', Mr. Webb settled.

from a man who declared he would shoot it because it barked at his children. The poor beast was almost always chained. Since he has been with me he has become quiet and has proved himself to be a most gentle, affectionate creature, although he is an admirable guardian of the back-door. He is long-eared, brown and white, loves water, and is a good companion out of doors. May I give him to you when you are established at Worth? I already have an old collie who came to us when he was a puppy.

Curiously enough, I stumbled this week upon a very laudatory, and, as it seemed to me, appreciative review of Scawen Blunt by 'Ouida'. I shall get his poems from the Library if they are there and read them.

My coat is one suitable for all purposes, indoor and out of door. I find this double service a great convenience. It is better, I fancy, to rely on clothes rather than on fires.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

7.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

27 September 1900.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . The epoch represented by Raymond Buildings is now about to pass away, and I wished for a reminder of it. What are you going to do

with the other book-case and the table if they are too big for the cottage?

Like you, I do nothing with new books. I cannot remember them, but I do remember the old books, and the emotion rekindles—sometimes—with which they were read when I had a little more hair on my head and it wasn't quite so white as it is now.

Will you kindly tell me where I shall be likely to find a good stove which will keep alight for twelve hours without replenishment? I have been to Doulton's, but their goods are too costly. It should be a closed stove. I am afraid the winter at this height will try us.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

8.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells,
27 October 1900.

MY DEAR WEBB,

You are doubtless over head and ears in moving or preparing to move, but please find time for a postcard telling me when you will be discoverable at your new address. Molly wants to know if she can be of any service to you in selecting and buying crockery, pots, pans, &c. She has gone to Oxford for a few days, but charged me, before she left, with this message.

I am very glad to find that the proposed tinkering

with St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Church is to be resisted, and I was also glad to see that Thackeray Turner used what I consider proper language in describing Gibbs's architecture. It is not, perhaps, the highest ecclesiastical art, but it is most interesting to me historically, and some day it will be more valuable than it is now.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

9.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

26 May 1901.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I have seen no fire at present which is better than the frying-pan, and I shall not therefore jump—at any rate just yet. It is difficult to disentangle the causes of restlessness, such as mine. Partly it is induced by hope, though so often deceived, that change might improve my wretched lower organs.

The toad beneath the harrow knows
Exactly where each tooth-point goes.
The butterfly upon the road
Preaches contentment to that toad.

I don't mean you are the butterfly. Not a bit like one!

Molly came back yesterday. A friend of hers will arrive next Tuesday. As soon as she departs we will arrange a visit to 'Caxtons'. . . .

I was so glad to see you. If you hadn't written to me when [you] did, I should have sorrowfully concluded you had gone into a monastery and were flagellating yourself. Molly sends her love. She was sad she was not at home. . . .

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

I wish you could remember the title of that book about Palestine. I always read anything worth reading about that land, and pictures of it are a special attraction to me.

10.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

31 August 1901.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I have read carefully Lethaby's address¹ and return it to you to-day. I wish he had omitted the last sentence of the first paragraph. It is smart, but unnecessary, and the implication in the 'live rabbits' is false. The sneer at 'Science' is also unworthy.

The paper is very instructive. I gather that the 'architect' of mediaeval times was a person who had been apprenticed to a building trade. The difference between him and the modern architect is not that the former when he was a 'master'

¹ 'Education in Building', read before the R.I.B.A., 17 June 1901. See *R.I.B.A. Journal*, 3rd Series, vol. viii, pp. 385-99.

worked with his hands and the latter does not, but that the former had been apprenticed to a craft and the latter is brought up in an office. In Greece the architect, although he had probably been mason or carpenter, was certainly an employer. Plato says (*The Statesman* 259 E), 'Every architect (ἀρχιτέκτων) is not himself a workman but a ruler of workmen'. It would be interesting to discover how the word is used in mediaeval Latin. Unfortunately our big dictionaries deal only with classical Latin. The great authority Facciolati-and-Forcellini-Lexicon contrasts 'architectus' with 'faber' (workman). The 'architectus' has the 'design and disposition of the whole work'. This is supported by a quotation from Cicero. But, as I have just observed, the ἀρχιτέκτων or 'architectus' may nevertheless have been a craftsman, and this is really the important point. *How* important it is the man who lives in a villa like mine will speedily discover, and he will insist on it with literally *damning* emphasis.

What Lethaby says about beauty, proportion, &c., is gospel. My own notion derived, not from art about which I am utterly ignorant, but from life, is that it would be well, for the present at any rate, to think nothing whatever about beauty but exclusively about what is honest, true and *convenient*, leaving the beauty to look after itself. It certainly is the proper thing to do in the arts of speaking and writing. The moment we try to

speaking or writing 'beautifully' we become humbugs. 'Whenever', my father used to say, 'I have written a sentence I think fine, I strike it out.' My eye rests with more satisfaction on Lethaby's London and North Western engine than it does on 'beauty' stuck on to a building and not naturally and necessarily evolved. Can anything be more tormenting than a house like this which lets in wind, cold, heat, wet, which hasn't got a cupboard nor a place in which to put one, which stands on one of the most exposed situations in England and is nevertheless all doors and windows, every one warped, and presents you as a substitute for comfort and peace green bricks, art balustrades and mantelpieces, covered, by the way, with borax and some sticky abomination instead of white lead and varnish?

But Lethaby and his sort will never do any good until the people are converted who want these villas. The people demand them and the supply follows. 'Isn't it sweet!' was the exclamation of a lady leaning over my gate the other day. The 'Respectable' is what is worshipped at Crowborough. No Juggernaut nor Pope could be so tyrannous. So we come back to the old, old story that it is the devil in each one of us who must be expelled before any angel will appear. For 'Respectability' is really the devil, the true devil, imposture, lying, thieving, the root of evil.

But I don't want to diverge. Many questions

one would like to put to Lethaby and his old documents. Would that his rolls and charters could reply! What would you not give to see with your own eyes a day such as was actually passed by Master Henry when he was building the Abbey, breakfasting with him in the morning and standing with him afterwards on the scaffold!

Faithfully thine,
W. HALE WHITE.

II.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

14 September 1901.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I did not say Lethaby was 'smart'—far was I from meaning it—only that the 'skinning live rabbits' was open to the accusation. All of us, with rare exceptions, lie open to it, specially when we begin to write or talk. When we hold our tongues and drop the pen we are better. The exceptions are *very* rare, Homer, the Bible, Aeschylus, and one or two more.

But I want to beg, not to moralize. I beseech you to send me, for a religious, national object, a copy of the etching, as soon as printed, of the peacock.¹

¹ What was the peacock? It sounded like a bird one would wish to know, and through the kindness of Mr. Emery Walker I have been able to make its acquaintance—'a marvellous drawing', so he says, 'for a man turned seventy'. This

Not one word more, for my request must stand by itself, prominent, pointed.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

12.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.
25 September 1901.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I will obey any instructions about the peacock, provided only I can get him. I am sure if you put the case as you can put it if you exert yourself properly, I shall have the Junonian bird. His owner would be a chuff—mark the true Sussex word—to object.

I have just got two of the three supplementary volumes of my *Dictionary of National Biography*. They contain the names of the people who have died since the dictionary was begun. William Morris is to be in the third volume, which will be out next month. I 'contemplate with mixed feelings', to use a lovely phrase I heard once from a preacher, these later lists. It is good to have a few records of our contemporaries, but what a fearful disproportion between later and earlier years! Three volumes for 1881-1901 and one would be enough for all the years before 1600! The space for the

beautiful book-plate, I am told, is to be reproduced in a Memoir of Philip Webb by Professor Lethaby now in course of preparation.

centuries before 1600 is doubtless too brief. I should like to know more of those singular persons, totally forgotten, as Lethaby tells us, who built Westminster and other abbeys and cathedrals, but I really do think it would be better to possess only the scanty knowledge we have of the past than such overwhelming details, mostly insignificant, as we have of the present. Immense oblivion is Nature's way and is best. What will wretched posterity do with this biographical dictionary if it is to be continued on the same scale ! . . .

I had to stop in order to go to London. I found a thick smoke fog, and everybody hurrying and squeezing as usual. I was obliged to call on a man who was at 'Lloyd's'. Did you ever look inside that place? It is in the Royal Exchange. How thankful I am, or ought to be, I am not 'in the City'.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

13.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

22 October 1901.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . I now want to know if you can meet me one day next week—the autumn colours will not have gone—at Hartfield Station by the train which gets there from Three Bridges at 9.51. We can walk about two miles past Hartfield Church

and Old Buckhurst, and the pony-chaise will then meet us and bring us here. Any day you like before the November alteration of trains. Do, please ; life is now very short.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

14.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

19 February 1902.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Can you tell me if yew will make good furniture ? A man near this house is cutting down a big yew tree, and if the wood is fit for chairs and tables I could get a plank or two from him. It is a scarce sort of timber, and I have never seen any of it made up.

How have you weathered the cold ? We went away to Bath and Lyme Regis, hoping to cheat the winter, and have come back to the worst of it. The absence of rain, unless we have a deluge soon, will be serious. The brooks here are as dry as in summer. I never saw that in February before.

I bought a little while ago Whitaker's *History of the Craven Hundred*, one of those books which used many years ago to be written but are not written now, the work of a man who gave his whole life to the study of the records of that part of the country in which he lived. Craven contained Bolton, Barden Tower, the Cliffords and the

Nortons. What creatures those northern folk were ! Their story is astonishing. The precariousness of their existence, Scotch incursions, Wars of the Roses, &c., &c., combined to produce a courage and a constant preparedness for emergency which, notwithstanding their savagery, are most fascinating. You know Bolton. In the abbey bills there are charges for a year's supply of wine—8,000 bottles. In addition enormous quantities of beer were brewed. There were about 100 monks and there were also servants in great numbers, but the servants would not have drunk Burgundy. Clearly Bolton was not built by starved saints. The eatables are on the same scale.

What I mean about the virtues of the Cliffords, Nortons and such-like is that they are just those which our modern life, hemming us in with spiked fences a yard apart, does not encourage.

Don't I know those lovely Exeter bells about which I send you the clipping¹—not aggressive

¹ A letter from Thackeray Turner in the *Times*, 14 February 1902. As Secretary to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings he wrote on behalf of the Committee to protest against the 'mutilation' of the bells. 'The present scheme provides for cutting off the cannons—i. e. the metal loops at the crown of the bell by which it is attached to the oak-stock—and . . . to recast the tenor.' Both actions, it was maintained, would have deteriorated the quality of the sound, and the first would have involved the risk of cracking the bell.

The scheme was carried out, and, setting all controversy aside, it may interest campanologists to know the opinion of one of the ringers to-day. 'It is not considered that the sound has been spoilt to any appreciable extent. In the case of the

like that horrible bell in the Parliament Tower, but soft, musical, consolatory, sedative. The shadow of the shadow of a risk is a crime.

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

Three score and ten was I the month before last ! You are really ten years younger. Perhaps I might have been as young as you if I could have designed and built beautiful houses.

15.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

22 February 1902.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . Goethe was always humble in the presence of Sir Walter,¹ ' the richest, most gifted, most renowned story-teller (*erzähler*) of our century ', as he calls him. ' Erzähler ', though, is more than a story-teller. It means him who recounts, tells, anything. I remember the passage in Eckermann.

I cannot imagine who could have said anything

tenor, which was recast with a considerable amount of metal added, the effect of the removal of the cannons cannot of course be defined, but the result gives to Exeter the heaviest ringing bell in the world.'

¹ Philip Webb, in replying to the letter of 19 February, had written: ' I dare say you know your *Fair Maid of Perth* well ; what admirable scene-painting is that of the weak king and terrible Scotch barons in the Abbey there ! Eckermann tells of Goethe " spotting " that scene, of the arrival of the prince in the courtyard.'

about Rugby. The rumour may have some foundation. My rent is to be raised if I stay here, and I am told I must take the house on a repairing lease for 7, 14, or 21 years. Ernest, who is in lodgings near Rugby, is the only son unmarried. He would much like to live with us, and we should like to have him. It seems natural that we should be together, as I am getting old. But whether the reunion will actually take place I cannot say. The town of Rugby is, I believe, dreary and unattractive, all railways, sidings, junctions, screaming engines and factories. The sole possibility is a village near, which Ernest could reach. Then, again, I dread removal. The thought of it makes me sweat.

Molly sends her love. She has no objection to 72 years if they could be such as yours.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

16.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

10 April 1902.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I am in a great difficulty. This house is bitterly cold, mainly because there is no boarding under the tiled roof, and my bedroom goes up into it. Cold is bad for my inside. I have a perfect horror of moving, but the landlord has not a penny

and will do nothing. I obtained an estimate for boarding the roof, and it comes to £68!! It would be madness for me to spend this sum on a house which is not my own. Can you think of any less expensive way by which I can protect myself? Would flooring the joists in the roof or lining the walls inside be of any use? I must settle in a few days whether I am to remain here.

I was going to write to you about the Axe river and Axmouth, where I have been lately, but I must postpone this to the solution of pressing perplexities.

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

I7.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Tunbridge Wells.

16 April 1902.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . I told you I was at Axmouth¹ the other day, a true little Devonshire village, cottages built of cobbles plastered and whitewashed, a brooklet running rapidly down the village street; each cottage has a little bridge. The church has been restored beyond all belief, paved with the vulgarest red and yellow tiles; the roof has been slated and on the top are villa ridge-tiles. But the upper part of the tower is still untouched, and

¹ Cf. Axmouth in *More Pages from a Journal*.

looks out over the estuary of the Axe just as it has looked for hundreds of years.

The Axe has always been a favourite river with me. I do not know anything more lovely than its upper course. It has a trick of twisting itself mile after mile into loops, many of them returning almost completely on themselves. It is rather a rapid stream, and curls round the corners of these loops so prettily. But till a week or two ago I had never seen its outlet. About two or three miles above it, Axe desists from its loops, for it comes to perfectly level meadows between hills and feels the tide. It goes straight on towards the shore, but when it is within a hundred yards of high-water mark it is confronted by a huge bank of shingle, just such a bank as chokes the Char river. But Axe is stronger. Although it can't force its way through the bank directly, it sweeps alongside it for a bit, till it finds a weak point, turns against it at a right angle, cuts through with a great rush and in half a minute is in the sea. It is really worth while to go to Axmouth to see that sight.

We have been smothered in fog up here day after day. I don't like it, and imagine it must be unwholesome.

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

18.

Lord's Well Lane, Crowborough,
Sussex.

24 October 1902.

MY DEAR WEBB,

You had a narrow escape the other day. I was to be at Three Bridges with two hours to wait, and I should have been tempted to spend part of the two hours with you. However, the morning was so wet that I could not go. Mrs. Arthur Tennyson, sister-in-law of Alfred, lives at Cranleigh, and she had asked me to fetch a box of Dorothy Wordsworth's letters addressed to Catharine Clarkson, Dorothy's most intimate friend. Mrs. T. has kindly sent them to me now, 'forewarned of God in a dream', I suppose, that I am to be trusted. I am reading them. They are not literary: they are records of her goings-on in her Cumberland cottage, of her hard life and of daily events. They are most interesting, to me at any rate. The toughness of those Cumbrian folk, their ability to live on a little and to be content are remarkable. D. and her brother just before he was married had less than £100 a year, but they were happy, saved money and entertained troops of friends.

I hope you are well and busy. I am looking forward to the winter with some dread—our house is so exposed and so cold. I have been trying to cure a smoky chimney by putting a stove in it,

but have not succeeded. The ways of wind and smoke are singular. In Spain, where my Jack is, the people put on more clothing and do not much depend on fires.

So far had I gone when I was stopped. The iron now is black and cold. However, I really had nothing to say but to ask how you are, and this I do want to know. I was inside Groombridge Place this morning for the first time. The house was built in the time of James I, on the site of a much more ancient building. The terraced gardens and moat, I should imagine, belonged to this earlier house. The inside panelling, we were told, certainly belonged to it. The people who are in the place are Saints, a family which has lived there since the seventeenth century, and they preserve it, you will be glad to hear, with sacred care. Nothing has been touched. The old furniture is kept. 'Saints' is a surname.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

19.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

26 May 1904.¹

MY DEAR WEBB,

Mrs. Sickert was here yesterday. She tells

¹ There are no letters preserved between this date and the last, save one from Mr. Webb in March 1904 where he refers to a letter received the previous month.

me that the Blunts are at home.¹ When you see one or the other of them do not forget to ask my question—whether any European has travelled in that part of Arabia lying between 15° and 23° latitude, and 45° and 58° longitude. I have been to the Royal Geographical Society and can get no information there. Molly has gone to her brother's in London for a few days. I wish you were at Groombridge. I wonder if you have made up your mind about staying at Worth. I was turned out of this house about a fortnight ago by plasterers and paperhangers, and went to the Isle of Wight. In many places it has been terribly changed for the worse, but I was glad to find that Bonchurch is pretty much the same. If moving for three months were not such misery, I should like always to spend the winter there. It is so sheltered and the sea is so wonderful. The downs rise to 800 or 900 feet at the back.

I have just heard suspicious news about Winchelsea, and am going to write to the Anti-scraper.²

My wretched head is so bemuddled with an unusually pertinacious attack of my old disorder that I cannot write properly. I hope this summer weather is good for your back.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

¹ Crabbet Park, the property of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, was close to Worth.

² The Society for Protecting Ancient Buildings.

20.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

18 June 1904.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . We have never had in my memory a more wonderful year for leaves and bloom. Our garden has been a sight! But—what of course is to be expected—it has been a wonderful year also for weeds. They are hoed up and apparently done to death one week and are as vigorous as ever the next.

I have been reading everything on which I can lay hands about St. Francis of Assisi, but am sorely at a loss for some book about the town which will give me simply an account of its buildings, their dates, and, above everything, a plan to scale. Augustus Hare's *Cities of Central Italy* is good for what you don't want to know, but not otherwise. If you can recollect a book, not too learned, and can send me the title on a postcard I shall be grateful.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

21.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

27 July 1904.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I wish you would send me a word, if it is

only on a postcard, to say how you are. It has somehow got into my head that you are not so well as you have been. I had made up my mind to go to Worth to-day, but when the morning came I thought I had better not. You might be away, or disinclined to see anybody, or busy, or at any rate dislike surprise. If your health is tolerably good, can't you come here for a day and sit under our trees? . . . I am anxious about Winchelsea and cannot find out what is intended there. Some mischief, I am afraid.

. . . You should read at your leisure Murray's *Joan of Arc* which was recommended to you when you were ill. It is one of the few modern books which is really precious. All that it tells us has been known in France for years, but not in England. It is not a made-up story but original documentary evidence. Oh, that you or I could have been at Rouen with ten thousand soldiers and artillery, wherewith to blast into hell that damned bishop and his crew, English and French, who tried and burnt the saintly heroine! Oh, that I could have gone with her to execution, and have stood at her side in the flames!

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

22.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
4 September 1904.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . I saw the day before yesterday the series of Morris and Burne-Jones windows at Speldhurst. At the east end of the church is a large, glaringly-repulsive window, one of the worst I ever beheld. If you look at it your eyes are put out for some moments for the others beside it. This struck me as characteristic of our age. We can only get the good in patches, and the bad is everywhere in violent contrast. There is no general harmony, such as there must have been in Greece, for example, in the time of Pericles.

If you are afraid of passion do not read the *Joan of Arc*. The mere recollection of that book almost bursts me. I want a large vocabulary, an expressive power like Swinburne's when he curses the second Napoleon.

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

23.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
16 January 1905.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . I meant to have sent you the play of

Tolstoy's¹ which has been acted in London, but I do not think you could read it. I began it, and found it so horrible that I was obliged to throw it aside. It is a wonder to me that any man could have written it and preserved his sanity. I see that Zola, even Zola, decided that it could not be acted in Paris. To my mind it is not art, but an utterly unredeemed story of lust, murder, and inconceivable brutality. No doubt it was written with a purpose, but the purpose is defeated.

Before this east wind came, we had some miraculously lovely days, lovely from dawn to sunset. Two mornings I went out at half-past six to watch the growing light in the south-east, and in the evenings the moon, Jupiter, Venus, and the sunken sun were as nearly as possible in a straight line, a singular and perfect demonstration of the line of the ecliptic or sun's path in the heavens. Do write soon.

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

24.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
23 January 1905.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I send you by parcels post a copy of the Bunyan. I was asked two years ago to write it and

¹ *The Power of Darkness*, performed by the Incorporated Stage Society at the Royalty Theatre, December 1904.

refused, knowing that I was unfitted for the task. Some time afterwards the invitation was renewed. The publisher said that I was Bedford born and bred, knew the country well, that through my Puritan ancestors I was in sympathy with Bunyan, &c., &c. I had in my desk a paper, not published, although written a long while back, on the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and I thought I would try to add to it. The present volume is the result. Friends and critics have complained that I have given too much of Bunyan himself. My theory has always been that if you really wish to exhibit a great man you should let *him* speak. If you wish to use him as a text for a sermon in which to display your own cleverness, the case is altered. Besides, I have found that people, even those who are called well-educated, have not read even the *Pilgrim's Progress*. To say I did not enjoy my little labour would be untrue. I *did* enjoy it, and naturally all the more because Elstow and the Ouse and in a measure the temper of the man are in my blood. But with the utmost sincerity I also say that my essay fails. It wants strength, patience, and historical knowledge. It wants ten years' more work. Say nothing about it. It is a pity to pay postage back. The publisher has sent me other copies which cumber my shelves. You will notice the portrait, which is photographed from a pencil drawing on vellum in the British Museum. I did not select the photographer, and experts tell me it might have been

better. The *Dictionary of National Biography* says White, the artist, drew from life.

How I should love to see a few of Michael Angelo's drawings, including the Last Judgement, and listen to an exposition from you thereon. I have often reflected that everything I have heard you say about art directly refers to life. For *non*-reference to all that is human I never saw anything to surpass a huge house, built by —— for an immensely wealthy city merchant, which I went over yesterday. The merchant and his wife furnished it to their own liking, or rather to the liking of —— and there is not one single article in the place beautiful or simple, not a thing selected because it satisfies by its form any special desire or need of the people who live in it. All is regulation Tottenham Court Road, touching the soul nowhere.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

25.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

23 March 1905.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I have finished the Burne-Jones, and it goes back to-day by post, registered.

It is quite impossible to me to put in writing all that passed through my mind as I read it, but this I will say at once that, granted the scale on which it is planned, the workmanship is perfect. Better

English there could not be, so simple and direct : the author's self is almost unduly suppressed, and the subject tells its own story. The scale may be a little too big for an outsider like me, but not so, probably, to artists and friends, who naturally will find every detail interesting.

The chief value of the book, so far as I am concerned, is that I understand now by its help what Burne-Jones *wanted to do*. Always this question has to be put—what was the man's aim and did he achieve it? Other people's aims must not intrude. At p. 141, Vol. ii, Lady B.-J. quotes a passage from Rio which makes volumes of criticism irrelevant. I see by that apt reference, and her two or three words of modest application, for what the great painter stands, and henceforth I look at his work with different eyes.

That which is subordinate, the pictures of contemporaries, some of whom, of course, I knew, is delightful. The old days return to me of early pre-Raphaelitism and all that came with it. I took down my copy of *Maud*. The date in it is 28th July 1855. I remember reading it in Holborn, walking along the street on a hot summer's morning at six o'clock. I forget where I was going.

I rejoice to discover that B.-J., apart from his art, belonged to the church of the faithful, and that he could curse the iniquities of the day, Transvaal and other, and the doers thereof. But I must stop. I have made one or two separate notes, and you

must illuminate me upon them when next we meet.

What did you think, or rather feel, of those rain-storms we had a few days ago? Weren't they wonderful? Springs drying up, river an empty ditch, and then came down the floods. I went out in the worst of the tempests to see once more the Medway swirling under the stone arches of old Hendal Bridge. I cannot remember that I ever had to face rain driven in such masses and with such violence. But oh! how I did enjoy it! Wasn't it sweet?

I went to Mrs. Boyce's yesterday. She was exceedingly kind. Not for a long time have I seen any water-colours which drew me so much. Two, in particular, one which I think Mrs. Boyce called 'La Portière', a house with a big arch; and another of Minehead with Lundy Island in the distance. In this last there was no striking subject, nothing but a plainish row of by no means 'picturesque' cottages, a common bit of foreground and a common outlook over the Bristol Channel. But the artist had brought down heaven on it.

On my way to Mrs. Boyce's I looked in at Carlyle's old house. I had not been inside since his death, and it was almost too much for me. There was the bed on which he slept his last sleep. The simplicity of everything, plainness, frugality, brought from Craigenputtock and never corrupted by London, struck me again as it struck me before

when I saw him alive. I noticed, by the way, amongst the books an *Earthly Paradise* given him by Ruskin, and some verses to him by Goethe in his own hand. Some of the books had a Carlyle book-plate in them with the motto 'Humilitate'. The catalogue is well done, and I have had copied out for you a quotation in it which I do not remember elsewhere.¹

Molly sends her love. She has also read the Burne-Jones. Let me have just a card announcing safe reception.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

Mrs. Boyce observed parenthetically, with just a tinge of reproach-regret, 'Haven't seen him for three years'. Was it 'seen' or 'heard of'? I am not sure.

26.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

1 July 1905.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Quite by accident I found out that in a back number of *Country Life* there were pictures of your house at 'Clouds'.² Why didn't you tell me? Now I am not going to say what effect those pic-

¹ See note p. 245.

² The home of the Wyndhams, built by Philip Webb and rebuilt by him after the fire on 6 January 1889.

tures had upon me. This will be no penalty for your crime ; but it will be wholesome chastisement for you if you submit to be bored by my company one day next week. I will temper justice with mercy so far as to permit you to decide what day it shall be.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

27.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
21 March 1906.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . I shall certainly try the anthracite. There is a man in Mortimer Street named Pither, an ingenious chap, who has invented a stove with an open fire. It is lighted when winter begins and is kept alight till spring. It is slowed down or accelerated according to weather, and burns smokeless coal. It is well made, *but* rather too expensive. I have seen it in action, and it looks as if the draught would give sufficient ventilation. The price is £7 exclusive of fitting—too much for me. I asked about Inchbold's book because, although I just remember him as the painter of one remarkable picture, I did not know till a few days ago, when a visitor praised them warmly, that he had written poems.

I am able now to get downstairs for a few hours and write by the fire. . . .

Oddly enough I read this morning a quotation from that most learned Greek scholar Dr. Frazer, author of *The Golden Bough* and of the *Pausanias*, that the inhabitants of Pithuria at this day, when influenza appears amongst them, harness two goats to a cart and drive them out with Influenza (big 'I') into the forest or wilderness. 'Influenza', so they say, does not return. Isn't this a curious survival?

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

28.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
17 September 1906.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I was glad to get your note. . . . The rain is blessed and the brown field opposite to me is already reviving.

I have just finished a letter to the Local Government Board on behalf of my poor neighbours who live in cottages bordering the road, praying that some consideration may be given to them in framing the new Motor Bill. I have no hope that my appeal will get as far as John Burns. If it does, I think the facts I have collected would move him. Washerwoman, for example, having to do her work twice over because an insolent brute whirls past just as the clothes are drying.

W. H. W.

29.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
14 November 1906.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I have read the pamphlet.¹ As to the cases recorded in it, the facts have to be taken for granted: no cross-examination is possible. What more there may be in the Blue-books I do not know: I have not seen them. Very likely Mr. Blunt, who has lived much with Oriental people, who has had much experience of the inability of the ordinary Englishman, specially the English military officer, to understand them, may consider himself their advocate and take a side, but he produces enough to make me wish for thorough, impartial inquiry.

I am much struck with that Decree of 1895, which, in reality, is martial law (see p. 21), and under that decree the wretched Denshawai villagers were tried. I should like to have seen what some skilful English counsel like Sir E. Carson or Sir R. Isaacs, not afraid and practised

¹ *Atrocities of Justice under British Rule in Egypt*, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (T. Fisher Unwin, 1906).

On the 10 November Mr. Webb had written: 'Having the enclosed pamphlet in my hands again I send it to you, with the wish—if it be not against your inclination—to read, and let me know what you think of it. I suffer in spirit much if there is a clear case of injustice overlooked by the public, and the more so if it be 'political justice', accepted as such, when it is certain that it is the reverse, and by political custom has to be hushed up.'

in the art of turning people inside out, would have done for the defence. It is characteristically and contemptuously British that the officers should amuse themselves with shooting native pigeons. If they were bored because they had nothing to kill, the Government might have sent them a ship-load of rats from the Thames docks.

The Pamphlet stirs up a much larger question—Is our sovereignty over the Oriental races, Moham-medan and other, good or evil on the whole? I know what is to be said for our rule in India; that we keep the peace between Mohammedan and Hindu; that we have mitigated famine and pestilence, introduced railways and telegraphs. But have we not simply propped up these people: have we influenced them, put any self-support into them; do they in the least care for our civilization; is it adapted to them in any way; is not our system thoroughly unnatural out there, and will it not one day collapse?

The afternoon your note came a lady who lives in Eastern Africa and has been in England for her health came to bid me good-bye. She tells me that during the Boer War when there were soldiers in East Africa they kicked and beat the natives and at the same time gave them gin and cigars. She is a sober churchwoman, and when she first went out thought the missionaries and our methods would do good. She now thinks otherwise. The natives, left to themselves, are temperate and do

no harm. The men have, each of them, many wives who do not quarrel. There is complete absence of fear of death. It is of no use trying to teach them Christianity : they are not fitted for it. Here is the same old story, oil and water : *in the long run* will it turn out well? For my own part I should be grieved to see the Eastern religions and ways go down before Anglo-Yankeeism. Its vices are more hideous and terrible to me than those of the Arab.

This is a digression : I could not help it : To go back to Denshawai. Though I cannot be sure Mr. Blunt is exact, I have seen quite enough of military people to be certain that he may be. They always seem to me to consider they are the highest type of human existence. Every variation from it is for the worse. The consequence is entire want of sympathy, and a determination that British society-virtue, a very double article, is the only virtue on the planet.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

30.

The Cottage, Groombridge,
Tunbridge Wells.

7 March 1907.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I should be sorry if you spent a penny on the *Rambler* Selection,¹ and a copy goes to you, there-

¹ *Selections from 'The Rambler'*, edited by W. Hale White, Oxford University Press, 1907.

fore, by this post. A card in acknowledgement of safe receipt is all I want by way of reply.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

You will at once be struck with the apparent defect in the eye of the portrait, but please see a remark in the preface on that matter. Sir Joshua was honest! the engraver was not. I mean the old engraver. It seems to me that Emery Walker has done his work admirably.

31.

The Cottage, Groombridge,
Tunbridge Wells.

17 April 1907.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . I saw the two Pisanos and remembered both. Wonderful, wonderful, specially St. Eustace and the stag-dogs, sensitive to the divine vision!

I looked also at the Johnson again and at a prime favourite of mine, the Lord Heathfield in his red coat and with a great key in his hand. It hangs almost next to the Johnson.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

32.

The Cottage, Groombridge,
Tunbridge Wells.

19 August 1907.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I understand you have been away from

home, and I suppose this is a reason why I have not heard from you for so long and why you have not been to Groombridge, although I am afraid I should not get many letters or visits if I did not poke you up, risking your bad language. What day—say next week—will you come? To-morrow Mrs. Dannreuther will be here for a few hours, and I have a prospect of the dentist before me on Wednesday. At the end of the week I hope to see my son from Rugby, but afterwards I am free.

I hope you have not been as cold as I have been lately. I am mouldy for want of sunlight. They say—the farmers, I mean—that such a year for weeds has not been known by anybody living. Nevertheless we have not had a proper rainfall.

Molly sends her love to you. Do come.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

You will wonder how I knew you had been away. Miss Irene Noel told me. She is staying with her cousin and your friend, Lady Anne Blunt. Miss Irene called here last week. She lives in Euboea. If you are not too old to enjoy the sight of a handsome young woman—intelligent withal—you should take an opportunity of looking at her.

33.

The Cottage, Groombridge,
Tunbridge Wells.

22 August 1907.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . Thank you for the kind words about the little book.¹ Nobody took any notice of it, but you have, and that is enough. I did really write it with more zest than anything else I have attempted, not merely because it had to do with Wordsworth but because it was a sort of protest against the common trick of labelling a man and then assuming nothing more can be said about him. The division into 'epochs' or 'periods' is just as silly, that is to say if you think you can deduce from it.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

¹ *An Examination of the charge of Apostasy against Wordsworth.* Philip Webb had written, 22 August: 'You could not be aware of how much I have been indebted to you from the reading of that critical book of yours on Wordsworth, and his sacred and profane politics. I do not relish praising anyone's work, because I do it so awkwardly; but your handling of the subject and object of the little book came home to me as one of the best critical essays I can remember to have read. Truly, I read it twice, and in parts even thrice, and I carried it to Lady Burne-Jones in my enthusiasm, for she has a liking for Wordsworth beyond the ordinary.'

34.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
16 November 1907.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Recollecting that this is rather a dangerous time of year for you, I am *obliged* to ask you to send me half a dozen words to say how you are. The leaves have been wonderfully thick this year. They have also been wonderfully beautiful, and I am glad to say that, notwithstanding my age, I did once more feel them to be beautiful. I learned, by the way, the other day that although the wych-elm is a native here, the common elm is not, and that it was introduced by the Romans, who also introduced the sweet chestnut, ages before we had the horse-chestnut. The sweet chestnut still flourishes better in the south-east counties of England than in the others. It is singularly plentiful in Kent, and makes up almost all woods and thickets. The saplings are very tough, and the timber is said to last almost like oak. Not so the horse-chestnut.

Your lovely friend,¹ Miss Irene Noel, called again the other day on her way to her cousin, Lady Anne. I tried to make her talk about her

¹ But Mr. Webb has evidently not yet made her acquaintance, for he writes 5 December: 'I'm beginning to feel, after the way of Betsy Prig, that "there ain't no sich a person" as the fabled "Irene Noel"!'.

home in Euboea, and was partly successful. On her father's estate is one of the Homeric ports from which ships sailed for Troy !

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

35.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

8 December 1907.

MY DEAR WEBB,

There is a sad note in your last letter to which I cannot but respond. I am only eleven months behind you, and I also find my memory at fault. It sometimes gets to such a pitch that I forget the name of the person to whom I am talking, though I know him quite well. It cannot be helped, and I must endure it with other ailments which are a burden to me. But I want to tell you that this failure of memory is certainly worse when I am faint or tired, and that I think you ought to be on your guard against fatigue. My legs deceive me. I can walk five miles and they show no sign of giving way, but my head gives way, and perhaps your legs and head are in the same condition as mine. The temptation is strong to be much out of doors in fine weather, but it must be resisted when it is not warm enough to loiter or sit down.

I have had to go to the doctor for something

disagreeable between my shoulders, but he says there is nothing wrong with my lungs, although I have twice broken down in those organs. Maybe it is rheumatism and the rotting leaves. I do not stop indoors but I do not relish railway travelling, which I have had to do lately. A friend of Molly's has gone to Cornwall. The Great Western runs a train from Paddington to Plymouth without stopping, and she complained of the weariness and exhaustion of it, worse than if it stopped at several stations. This struck me, and I quite understand it. Isn't it mad? What do people do with the half-hour saved?

I bought three De Morgan tiles the other day for a wedding present. I found them in an old shop in Kensington. I wonder what your judgement is on his tiles. He does not make them now, but has taken to writing tremendously long stories which I have tried to read but cannot. Do not suppose I went to Kensington on purpose!

The one gift for which I pray is COURAGE. Three ladies whom we know, elderly now, daughters of a publisher, successor to old Newbery who was at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard a hundred years ago, were swindled out of almost every penny of their money by fraudulent trustees at their father's death. Gently brought up, they were not daunted, and started a typewriting office in Norfolk Street, Strand, enduring actual hardship and obliged to work all night when stuff came to be

copied in the evening which had to be returned early next morning. Last week we heard from them. One had been in a nursing home with pleurisy. Just as she was getting better, after a month's dangerous illness, her sister had to go into a hospital with sciatica. It fell entirely to the third sister to keep the typewriting going. The letter one of them wrote to us is such as one of the Spartans might have written after 'combing his long hair' in the pass of Thermopylae. The clouds are breaking for them a bit now, I am thankful to say. How the simple, brave words of these women did shame me! Farewell.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

36.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

5 May 1908.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I was very sorry to put you off yesterday. I thought it better to lie in bed. I had a troublesome cold, and this increased other worries which do not diminish as I get older. . . .

I mean, if all goes well, to look in on you if we can have again such weather as we had last Friday and Saturday. That was a wonderful visitation. I want to hear of something beautiful, and you can tell me more about beautiful things than anybody

now left to me. I often think I would give a good deal to have a collection of the drawings, those, that is to say, understandable by me, of your houses. I do trust every one is sacredly preserved.

. . . Faithfully as of old,
W. HALE WHITE.

37.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
31 May 1908.

MY DEAR WEBB,

A proposal has been made to place in Westminster Abbey a stained-glass window as a memorial to John Bunyan, and the Dean and Chapter have consented. I have been asked to attend a meeting to consider their reply. For my own part I do not care to have Bunyan in the Abbey. I need not give my reasons, but I want you to tell me as soon as you can whether you would put modern stained-glass even of the best kind into the Abbey; whether there is a chance that anybody can be found who can imagine tolerable illustrations of the *Pilgrim's Progress*; whether Mr. Lethaby has been consulted, and whether he will have any voice in the choice of artist and design.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

38.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

2 June 1908.

MY DEAR WEBB,

A lovely day it was: wholesome talk too, and exquisite drawings. I cannot get them out of my head, and have no wish to do so. What better filling could it have?

Morris's¹ weighty sentences are just to the point. I shall try to make use of them, but I have no hope of contributing the force of a blown filament of thistledown to stop the outrage.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

39.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

13 October 1908.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Molly came back from Cornwall greatly improved in health. She has been in bed, however,

¹ Mr. Webb had forwarded a pamphlet 'Concerning Westminster Abbey' written by William Morris for the Society for Protecting Ancient Buildings, 7 March 1892. 'I have taken the liberty of scoring in pencil some passages which seem to me so applicable to *your* purpose of defending the Abbey Church from further desecration. . . . Notice particularly the underlined passage at top of p. 11.' The underlined passage was a reference to 'the imitative and unoriginal stained glass which has got into the windows at various times, to the great damage of the effect of the church .

the last day or so with a very bad cold. As to myself, my history has been unfortunate. . . . At present, I have a trained, hospital nurse, an admirable person about fifty years old, quiet, cheerful, of great experience, but I cannot keep her at £2 2s. a week, and, besides, she would not stay merely to wait on me. . . . So I am in a difficulty. The worst perhaps of my trouble is that my nerves have been shaken a good deal. Not uncommon in such cases, I believe. There is nothing more to be said. I might add many reflexions, but they are obvious. In fact I wish I could rid myself of all these 'reflexions', which are quite useless, and could fix my attention exactly on what I have to do. This is hard enough to discover without weakening myself in a struggle with insolubilities.

My dear old friend, your letter was a great pleasure to me. Excepting one old lady¹ between eighty and ninety, from whom now I seldom hear, I have held on to you longer than to any human creature, and you still stand firm.

. . . Faithfully and always yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

40.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

15 November 1908.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Your letter was a light in darkness. Since

¹ Mrs. Colenutt.

I last wrote to you I have been mostly in bed. . . . Last night there was a consultation of doctors, and it was settled that I am to go to a nursing-home in London, probably to-morrow, and undergo an operation, which is to be done in two parts, one part following the other at an interval of about a week. The object of this division is partly to see if the second part, which is the more difficult, can be performed, and partly to lessen the risk. Molly will let you know the result.¹ I cannot write any more : the pain is trying.

Your friend as of old,

W. HALE WHITE.

¹ Her reports are preserved by Mr. Webb in the bundle of letters. The operation—a single operation after all—is ‘successfully performed’. On 10 December she hopes her father will shortly be lifted out of bed ; on 29 December she writes that he is safe home. On 5 January, ‘he has not been so well,’ and on 8 January there is a long letter to which she adds a long postscript explaining that this and the previous letter were written at her father’s dictation ; ‘He *does* suffer acute pain at times, but not so often as his letter would lead you to suppose, and the doctor’s great object now is to get my father to think as little as possible of his illness. . . . You will, of course, see a sad difference when you do come, for he is very thin and looks weak.’ On 14 January again he has ‘not been so well’. ‘On Sunday he was very delirious and we could not leave him for a minute. On Monday he was quieter, but still confused and dazed. Tuesday he was himself again, but yesterday the delirium returned. . . . He is better and quieter to-day. . . . They are still trying this inoculation treatment, and the doctor said this morning that he thought it was doing good.’ On 24 January, ‘My father has been rather better the last few days, and has been able to sit up each day for some

41.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

7 March 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I am not using Molly as an amanuensis because I am worse, but because I have got the cramp in one or two of the fingers of my right hand.

Your letter happily shows that you are well and rejoices me with the good news about your brother. You are wonderful to me. Twenty-nine degrees of frost, that is to say, the thermometer at 3, and you do not complain. What a blessing this warmer wind is, coming to us, straight from the Atlantic.

As to myself, I am better . . . but I am not yet free from pain and cannot regain my strength. I cannot walk across the room without difficulty, but the worst enemy is depression, natural, I suppose, considering what has befallen me in my seventy-eighth year. I shall be thankful to see you when your visit can be managed . . . and when we can sit together in peace for two or three hours at a time. I shall write to you the very first moment this burden of self is somewhat lighter. There is nobody, as you know full well, who would fit me better than yourself. My hope lies in the

hours.' On 7 February, 'he has been downstairs to lunch. . . . I told him you would like a note in his own handwriting (he *can* write now quite well), and I hope you will have one before long.'

spring and summer. It may be a vain hope, but it serves for the time.

Good-bye for the present.

Most affectionately,

W. HALE WHITE.¹

42

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

24 April 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I make slow progress, if I make any. So long as my nights are so broken I shall not get on. . . . Swinburne's death saddened me. We shall never hear such music again, and I love music and believe that it is a thing in itself. The sea is greater to me because Swinburne has voiced it. He has told me what it means to say.

What a curious business is this beatification of

¹ In the next letter (24 March) he writes : ' I should like to hear, in the first place, about yourself, whether the cold has been too much for you, and secondly about your brother. It will be medicine to me to know you are well and that your brother continues his recovery. No physic like the health, courage and cheerfulness of old, contemporary friends.'

Philip Webb's answer of 6 April is not preserved, but a passage from it has been carefully copied into the second of the two Notebooks from which the ' Notes ' in *Last Pages* and *More Pages* are derived. ' A little change of thought or scene will set my spirit on its throne again, when the earth and the heavens are nearly the sum total of the " properties " of life's drama with me—not forgetting the divine gift of personal friendship aforesaid, and say—a human book filled with hopes and loving-kindness.'

Joan of Arc ! A friend has sent me a full account in a Roman Catholic newspaper. The reasons for her exaltation are so odd, not in the least those which would be given at Worth or Groombridge. Still, I think that the recognition of Joan by the Catholic Church, her enrolment amongst the 'Blessed' with gorgeous ceremonies, will have an ennobling effect on the poor and pious in France.

Good-bye, my dear, dear friend. To miss a walk with you this spring is hard to bear.

Faithfully ever,
W. HALE WHITE.

43.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
5 May 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

My intellectual failure, consequent on my troubles, at least so I think, is not only forgetfulness, which is very bad indeed, but talking nonsense, mistaking, for example, the givers of gifts and thanking the wrong person as I did yesterday. Also stupidity at large, so that I am conscious of people staring at me in amazement. Also I get confused and muddled, head feeling as if it were stirred up with a stick when I try to understand anything which is not very easy. All this, however, is nothing compared with the physical weakness and depression from which the recovery, if there is any, is very slow.

I am glad they have got the Holbein,¹ although such a sum ought not to be paid for any picture, or, I was going to say, for anything else. Our scale of values is all wrong. It is a long time since I saw the Duchess, but I have never in the slightest degree been able to understand her miraculous power over me. I have looked at her and looked like one enchanted. I have tried to give people some notion of her witchery and could not say a word. Yet she is not especially handsome, as the word is usually understood.

Molly has gone to Hastings to spend a few days with our very kind friend Mrs. Dannreuther. The doctor wants me to go as soon as I can stand the journey : in fact it would be much better for me to leave this place now altogether, as we are gradually being entombed in trees. It did not matter so much when I could be out of doors for half the day.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

44.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

6 May 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Will you come next week, if I am as I am now ? The train leaves Three Bridges at 2.34 p.m. and returns at 6.16 p.m. If I should not be so well

¹ 'The Duchess of Milan' was acquired by the National Gallery for £72,000.

I will write again. I shall not be much of a companion, but you must let the past be an apology.

The east wind sets motor-car stench and dust right on our house. I suppose it is the dust which makes me cough. The dust is worse than the stench. My dear Shakespeare, the Malone I bought when I was young, with its pleasant large print, stands befouled with road-filth. I clean it to-day and it is as bad to-morrow. I had a coloured selection of the principal Academy pictures sent me. I was astonished at their vulgarity and gross, daring coarseness. I could not imagine who would hang such beastliness on his walls, until a friend suggested they were bought by the vile, millionaire worshippers of Phoenician Baal.

Your faithful friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

Any day after Tuesday will suit us.¹

45.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

11 May 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

To-morrow (Wednesday) will suit us very well, apparently, but as each night and each day is a voyage into a kind of sea-fog with me, in which

¹ On this letter Mr. Webb has written: 'Agreed to the visit on Wed., 12 May. I went to Groombridge'.

unknown evil possibilities may be hidden, I will telegraph to you to-morrow morning if I am totally unable to see anybody. It must be 'totally', for I do want you to come and you will do me good. So, if you do *not* hear, I shall look out for you. I wish that, as of yore, I could meet you at the station.

Affectionately, always, both of us,
W. HALE WHITE.

46.

1 Maze Hill,
St. Leonard's-on-Sea.
19 June 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Here I am in obedience to orders, although I did not accept Mrs. Dannreuther's invitation. She has now many visitors, and a friend kindly offered me this house at a very low figure. Molly is with me, and we brought a servant. We are by ourselves and can do as we like. Unhappily I had to bring the nurse also. My friend's mother, an old lady of considerably over eighty, was always very ready to welcome me when I used to call for half an hour's talk with her at her house at Groombridge, and when she was alive insisted on lending me the St. Leonard's house for nothing. She had a wonderful memory and up to the last could repeat pages of poetry which [she] had not seen till two or three years ago. My head every now and then troubles me. It is not simple

forgetfulness, but want of consecutiveness, muddle. However, if I notice it and dwell on it, it becomes worse. I should be better, I think, if I could take a drop of whisky now and then, but all alcohol is forbidden. . . .

To-day in the train I passed Etchingham Church. Do you remember our visit there? It stands as beautiful as ever on the turf, though somewhat insulted by a number of ugly sheds close to it. I dare say you know that part of the world. There are not many big trees, but it is well wooded with coppices. This morning the sun shone and a strongish wind blew from the west, turning up the under side of the leaves and giving the whole country-side a lovely greyish-green tint.

Good-bye for the present, my dear old friend.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

47.

1 Maze Hill Terrace,
St. Leonards-on-Sea.

8 July 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

No sooner had I got here than I was seized with the same trouble I had after the operation. . . . The doctor from Tunbridge Wells has been here to see me, and I am to be got home somehow to-morrow. I cannot resign myself to a strange doctor, and it is better to run some risk than to be ill in lodgings. The Tunbridge Wells doctor

insists on my return. The relapse is, of course, disheartening, but there is nothing to be said about it. Nor is there anything to be thought about it, which can do any good. I am glad you are well and fairly happy. The difference between us, you robust and me so weak, seems great, but after all, it is not so *very* great. I must be patient and wait.

Good-bye.

Your very affectionate friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

48.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
27 July 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I am glad you are at your brother's. He will do you good. I speak feelingly, longing for an escape from the four walls of my room, and from the thoughts which repeat themselves monotonously and painfully. It costs something to choke them, although I know I do no good by expression. I intensify them to myself and make other people miserable. I wonder if your brother took morphia to relieve pain. The doctor gave me one quarter of a grain every night. I struggle hard to leave it off, but, if the pain is bad, I am obliged to go on with it. The effect of stopping it is horrible depression. Do you know if this is the usual result of taking such a small quantity? My doctor says it is not.

You, I dare say, cannot tell me from your own experience, but your brother can, and he also will know how long this depression would last, supposing I could maintain my abstinence. This doctor of mine is gold medallist, M.D. of London, knows a lot, but is like a stone creature. He makes no allowance for personal weakness: there is a rule for the strong and no other for the feeble (of whom I am one) shrinking from pain and forecasting evil.¹

We had a tremendous thunderstorm yesterday. One explosion was right over head, or seemed so. I enjoyed it, or rather, it was relief to me, a sort of angry protest against the grey, formless sky we have had lately.

Farewell.

Your affectionate friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

49.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
18 August 1909.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The time has come round for a word or two about yourself. I also want to hear about your

¹ I let this very characteristic passage stand. Dr. Adeney was far from being a 'stone', nor could his patient be justly described as 'feeble'. The *Groombridge Diary* should be consulted, also for the facts about the morphia. So he *would* write at times—and frequently I was the amanuensis. See the *Groombridge Diary*, p. 483.

sister. As to myself I am not in such pain, although I suffer from weariness, depression, and unquiet nights. I am able to take up Sir Walter now and then, and find that he does much more than amuse me. Lockhart, and the *Letters* and *Journal*, lie at the back of the stories. What do you say to this passage from the *Monastery*? Mary Avenel had seen the vision of her father. Dame Glendinning *loquitur*:

‘ And that wad be the cause, then, that the bairn did na mak muckle din about what it saw—if it had been my Halbert himself, forbye Edward, who is of softer nature, he wad hae jammered the hail night of a constancy. *But it’s like Mistress Mary has sic nights mair natural to her.*’

Is it possible to go beyond that?

Miss Noel called here the other day. Her cousin, Lady Anne, is at Crabbet Park, as, of course, you know. ‘She is never so happy as when she is there.’ Miss Noel gave me some more delightful pictures of the primaeval life she leads in Greece. Fancy being able to see through that clear air the islands sixty miles away! But I must stop. I cannot write much at a time, but I can send much with what I write. This I do. Molly slips her love inside.

Your faithful friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

50.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
11 September 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

When your letter was brought to me this morning I was almost sure I knew what was inside it.¹ The darkness climbs up in the east both for you and me, and soon it will be night. Yes, I have often fancied that the breath leaves the body in the early morning. It is the right moment for departure.

. . . Ever faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

51.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
22 September 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I have got Mackail's essay on Swinburne. I thought it very good but with a little too much Oxford in it, and here and there insufficient appreciation. The common charge of words, words is not just. There are words, but they are not a substitute for meaning. We lose sight sometimes of the meaning because the expression dazzles us. Meaning comes out clearly in the

¹ Mr. Webb's younger sister had died at Winchester on 8 September.

Shakespeare, a noble piece of criticism, noble for its homage, its humility.

Will you come next Friday the 24th, the same time as before? If that day will not suit, I will name another. Molly's love.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

You will find here a Miss Dorothy Vernon Horace Smith. My memory is worse than yours, and I forget if I have told you about her. At any rate I have not told you all I should like you to know. Her father is the police-magistrate for Westminster. Molly met her at Ashted two years ago, and soon afterwards she came here. Directly I saw her I was much struck with her. She possesses singular genius and she is an artist, not in any particular province, but—what is perhaps better—in her way of looking at life and the world. She is religious and her religion is her own. She leans towards the Catholic side in the Church, but she continually surprises me by the originality of her faith and its disregard of limits. Must not a faith which is a necessity to the believer and is built by him always contain surprises? For eight years she has worked hard amongst young men of the poorest and roughest class in Beckenham, striving to introduce them to a better world than that in which they live. Her methods are not those of the district visitor or Sunday school teacher. She often reminds me of Tolstoy, whom, however,

she has not read. She has, in fact, read very little and is not in the least ' literary ', although she has written two stories. What little she does read she reads thoroughly. She leads her youths on Saturdays as well as Sundays, superintends their football and cricket clubs, and acts as umpire and scorer. This she can do well as she is an expert in games.

. . . She is here now for the best part of every week and at home at the end and beginning of the week. I have not become a ' convert ' to anything, but she has opened doors and drawn back curtains. Would to God I were younger and more receptive ! . . .

52.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
25 September 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Will you fix a day ? Any day after next Tuesday will suit me. Do not put me off for a long time. What do you mean by ' arguing ' ? Would I, dare I, argue with my beloved Webb ? Besides, arguing is poor work. It is curious that just after I got your note about Mackail and Swinburne I had a letter from Watts-Dunton, making me a present of two of Swinburne's books and telling me that Swinburne often talked of me and much approved a certain piece of work I had

done.¹ I value this little bit of information more than a testimonial from the Emperor of Germany or a Vote of Thanks from the House of Commons.

. . . I have managed to sit in the garden for a little while, but I fear I shall never again walk a couple of hundred yards. . . .

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

53.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

17 October 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . I have returned Lethaby's books. I have read everything I could understand and have found it most interesting and helpful. 'How helpful?' you will say. It is helpful to think of Greece, of a country where buildings were built in that way, where there was the mental freedom which is involved by that architecture: This thing is not impossible: it does not exist now, but,

¹ Watts-Dunton, in his letter of 22 September 1909, writes of 'your "Mark Rutherford" books which both Swinburne and I read with profound admiration.' Swinburne, however, had also written in August 1898 of the *Wordsworth and Coleridge MSS.*, and the *Examination of the charge of Apostasy*: 'I am sincerely obliged by the double gift I have just received from you. I bought a copy of the larger volume on its appearance, and read it with such interest that I value even more than I should otherwise value the copy you have been good enough to send me.' The 'Mark Rutherford' books had been sent to Watts-Dunton by the late Sir William Robertson Nicoll.

thank God, it has been. The slave, as Lethaby points out, might be an artist. We know, from the example of Epictetus and Aesop, that he might be a philosopher.

Please turn again to :

Theory of Greek Architecture, p. 217, 'The ancient artist', &c.

Greek Buildings, iv. p. 151, 'At that time . . . shadows from the guttae'.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

54.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

27 October 1909.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Will you please send me a postcard telling me what is the address of the publisher of those papers by Lethaby on Greek architecture and what is the price?

I am in perplexity about pumps and water supply, and am in conflict with my landladies over my lease. . . . It is a serious business or may be, for the well is 100 yards away and the pipe runs along the main road. Alas! also I cannot get about to see after things myself, and this chafes me.

By the way, I am not sure if you understand that the story I told you is nearly two years old. I don't quite know why I told you, excepting that the confidence was pleasant, and I wanted you to

make discovery through me. Have you ever noticed that when people encounter something they do not quite comprehend, they force it into a form which is familiar to them? It is curious: they will not let a man stand as he is, without explanation, as they call it. As their forms are few and narrow, what a large part of the Universe they miss!

I have been a little better until yesterday, when the 'black dog' laid hold of me again. The beast has poisonous fangs—other dogs do not taint the blood. If I could but get out it would be purified.

I pray that this damp weather may not upset you. I have thought of you continually and of that terrible wave of infected air which caught you when you were gathering fruit years ago. Do keep warm.

You are to send nothing except the postcard about Lethaby. I know you are busy.

. . . Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.¹

¹ On 29 October Mr. Webb wrote: 'Yes, I think you may be sure that what you told me as having happened, nearly two years ago, was really understood by me; and it is no mystery (also to me) "that the confidence was pleasant". Be assured that no added "explanation" was necessary for me; as my "forms" are very human, and I am not at all anxious that others should commend them.

'As there surely has been some gain in strength—and perhaps in freedom, now and again, from the acuter pains?—I hope too that the "black dog" will not [be] so persistent. This weather is dead against you, but good days, bad days, all days pass over, and I live by hope for my friends as well as myself.'

55.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

6 January 1910.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Are you so busy that you can defy this dark weather? What it has been with you I do not know, but here we have been smothered in a dark grey coverlet of cloud carefully laid by a slow north-easterly wind, and it is hard to believe that it is only a few yards thick and that on the other side there is the clear, blue sky. I cannot read for long, but Dorothy Horace Smith is staying here, who is a great corrective of unwholesome thoughts. It is sad that I am a prisoner while she and Molly are out so much, for they both love being out of doors, but this is not the greatest of the troubles of seventy-eight years. Dorothy, by the way, particularly wishes to be remembered to you. . . .

Molly sends warmest love.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

56.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

17 January 1910.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Time goes quickly and I cannot afford to wait long. Tell me how you are and how your

brother is. The more this monotony is broken by news of those for whom I care, the more tolerable it becomes. Remember I am almost a prisoner in my room and think chiefly about my failings. One amongst them is most painful loss of memory. It is not of much use to read, for what I read yesterday is forgotten to-day.¹ The postman has just returned a telegram to me, pointing out that I had omitted to address it, and the coalman has sent back a cheque with a wrong amount in it. Both these blunders the same day!! But there is some compensation. Molly, an hour or two ago, came into the room rejoicing. 'I am *so* glad; the sun shines.' It had been a dark, cold day. Venus is now brilliant in the south-west. I suppose you have watched her the last few weeks, serene, aloft above this election tumult. Thank God that, although it is increasingly difficult to understand, I can still admire what is lovely.

. . . Your faithful friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

¹ His daughter, in a letter to Mr. Webb 27 February, writes : . . . 'I am glad to tell you my dear father is much better. The doctor pronounces him to be a wonder. He can, when fine, walk out a little way: he did so this morning, and seemed cheery and happy. He would give you a rather sad account of his powers as far as reading and writing are concerned, but you must not look upon them as accurate. He *can* read and remember what he reads, and he *can* write most clearly.'

57.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
25 March 1910.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I will answer your kind inquiry at once. So far as muscular strength goes I am better. I can walk farther. . . .

I have managed to secure some entertainment in *Lorna Doone*, as good a story in my judgement as we have had, at any rate, in this last half-century, full of all the light, scent and colour of Exmoor, a land I love, and the work of a genuine artist.

I want much to see you. I hope it will not be long before you are here.

. . . Always your faithful friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

58.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
28 April 1910.

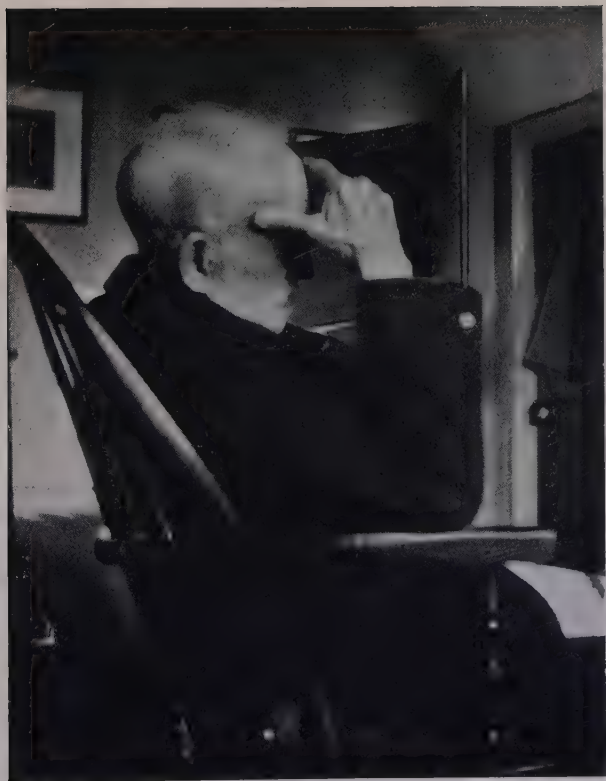
MY DEAR WEBB,

Your letter of the 19th of this month has just been re-read. It shows me that you are well and I am very thankful it is so. On this day, the 28th, you must be better, nearly nineteen¹ days better, for what days some of them have been! This morning I have been able to get out. What a sky, what clouds! What a heavenly blue

¹ This should, I suppose, be 'nine'.

showed itself between the boughs of the trees as you looked aloft! Here was beauty unspoilt, not a trace of earthly, dirty work. The daily advance in growth of shrubs, trees, and plants under the glorious sunshine and showers is amazing. There is a plant called *persicaria* in the garden, a kind of reed which has shot up six inches in a little over a week.

I must tell you something which has much interested me. Goethe strenuously fought against the Newtonian doctrine that white light was a composite of the prismatic colours. He held that it was primary and simple, and was passionate in his attack, declaring that his *Theory of Colours* was of more importance than all his poetry. The time, the care which he devoted to experiments were astonishing. The scientific men have been un-animously against him down to the present day. 'What could a poet know about science?' 'How dare anybody dispute the authority of the high priest?' But last Friday I read a paper by Professor Silvanus Thompson in which he says that the great physicists, including Lord Rayleigh, are becoming convinced that in his main contention Goethe is right. Of course, I rejoice, not only because the man to whom I owe so much has discovered a truth which these learned people have missed, but because the dogma which I never could endure, that pure white light is a made-up thing, is more than probably wrong.



IN THE STUDY

April 1910

369

30th April. Interrupted by one of my bad days. Better now. Molly sends her love to you. I am sure Dorothy would wish to be remembered to you if she were here. She is at home.

Your firm friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

59.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
18 May 1910.

MY DEAR WEBB,

To-day has made me wish you were here. Beautiful as I have felt it to be, I should have felt it to be more beautiful if your discerning artist's eye had looked with me. The wood at the back of our house was as if a bit of the heavenly azure had descended from above and lay upon the earth. And then the sky! With the dark pines rising into it!

I had a printed paper the other day from the rector of St. Clement's, Hastings, asking for a subscription towards a memorial to Rossetti to be placed in the church. He was married there. Rather an odd reason, I thought. A church, too, is hardly the place in which to remember him.

I wish you would tell me how you are, whether you are still able to respond to this marvellous outburst of spring. I can get out a little and drop on a stile or on a tree newly 'thrown' and barked, but I cannot escape the fiendish howl of the motor-

cars, like the scream of the demons in hell. There are more than ever this year.

. . . Always your friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

60.

‘Gale’, Chelwood Gate,
Uckfield.

10 June 1910.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I hope you have been properly astonished at the extraordinary beauty and grandeur of all that has happened on the earth and in the sky since I last wrote to you. First of all the rain and sun, so that one could see in a night the growth of grass and flowers and bursting of foliage; then thunder and lightning and yesterday the clouds, such clouds, white, massive, with sharp outlines against the clear blue! This is the place for a thunderstorm such as we had last Sunday night. We look on the South Downs from a height of about 600 feet and they are about 18 miles distant. From about 10 o'clock on Sunday night till 4 a.m. on Monday morning the thunder roared and the lightning flamed throughout the great valley—no sleep possible—and they have been continuous, although intermittent, ever since.

We, that is to say Dorothy, Molly, Nurse, and I, are in what they call a ‘country cottage’ on Ashdown Forest, lent to us by Lady Robert Cecil of whom, I believe, I have spoken to you.

June 1910

371

. . . I shall let you know directly we get back to Groombridge, and I shall then worry you to come over.

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

61.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

23 June 1910.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Will you come here next Wednesday the 29th June? If it should be wet, let it be the next day, Thursday. Please, please. It is too long a time since I have seen you.

Faithfully, steadfastly,
W. HALE WHITE.

62.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

15 July 1910.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I return Lethaby's paper. Part I do not understand, and part, for example the importance which seems to be given to geometry, is a surprise to me. It is very pleasant to find that I am authorized to consider the oast houses hereabouts as beautiful. I have always thought them so.

Come again as soon as you can. Do not expect invitations, but *come*. Dorothy has got another and still more beautiful piece of Bach for you, and,

above all, some old music by Scarlatti and Corelli. Its wealth of delicious melody astonishes me.

Love from us all.

Faithfully,

W. HALE WHITE.

63.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

13 September 1910.

MY DEAR WEBB,

‘Old age stares me in the face and no answer is possible to it.’ True, my friend, of myself as well as of you. Loss of memory, calling people by their wrong names, deafness—they are all warnings of the approach of that which I shall by no means avoid.

But the music, for one thing, still helps. Beethoven, Chopin, Bach, which years ago were so much to me, are still alive after a long sleep. I wish you could hear Chopin. His genius is wonderful. When I listen to him I can say nothing. I am lost.

I should like to know what you can tell me about Holman Hunt. Of course, I can say nothing of him as a painter, but I must confess I never cared for his ecclesiastical subjects and that almost all his pictures lack the true dramatic power—they are just put together. I want to know whether his religion corresponded with his work. Was the *Light of the World* his real belief?

I have seen some beautiful landscapes lately

by a gentleman who lives at Dorchester near Oxford. His name is Benett.¹ He does not get his living by art, although he has been trained as an artist in the schools and exhibits in London. He has been staying in Groombridge. He has come to the Cottage several times to hear Dorothy play and to show us his portfolio. What a country that must be round Dorchester, what land, what water, what river-banks!

I cannot read much, but I have been looking again into Boswell's *Tour in the Hebrides* with Johnson. Why I should ever read a new book is a question ridiculous when this stands on my shelves. It has the peculiar merit that, like the *Life*, you cannot exhaust it. Each successive reading, if you repeat the first twenty times, will be profitable.

. . . Your faithful friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

64.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
17 October 1910.

MY DEAR WEBB,

The winter will soon be upon us. May I not hope to see you here before it comes? What day shall I put down? At present there is no better prospect of my being able to call upon you at Worth than there was a twelvemonth ago. This

¹ Newton Benett.

imprisonment makes me very sad at times. All kinds of fungus thoughts spring up in my brain.

I am *so* weary of hearing the Tory suburban folk here discuss the strikes and denounce the strikers, who, of course, are always wicked and without a shadow of a grievance. Not one of these gentle-folk has ever reflected that the rich people are perpetually on strike.

As to the reasons why men strike, they are not difficult to discover by anybody who lives on Groombridge Hill and sees the motor-cars on a Sunday ; scores and scores of them, each costing more than five or six years' wages for hard work ; every car occupied with creatures, stockjobbers' wives mostly, from Tunbridge Wells, a flaunting, shameless display and an insult to everybody who must walk. What does my friend the blacksmith just below me think as he sees the clouds of dust before his forge ? By the way, I leaned over his little low door the other day for ever so long, and watched an old, familiar, beautiful sight, the shoeing of a great cart horse, a tremendous animal with such fetlocks ! He was so patient as his huge foot lay in the blacksmith's lap.

I have heard more Chopin lately. His genius is miraculous. You are right about the passion, but how does he contrive to invest it in such divine *melody*, ordered and metrical as Tennyson's songs ? The wonder in art is passion controlled by measure so that it becomes poetical.

■

Molly sends her love to you. Dorothy is at home, but we expect her back this week. Her father and mother have been staying with us or close to us, I should say, for we could not give them beds.

I have been asked to write something for the *Nation* about Boswell and Johnson, but now they have got it I do not suppose they will insert it. It is not the right length and not properly put together. I find that *arrangement* is now very difficult. I wish you would tell me what you are doing. I believe you are building a cathedral on the sly.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

65.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
3 November 1910.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I have been reading again your letter of the 19th of last month. I notice with much satisfaction that you are able to look after your 'estate'. I have been obliged by reason of expense to knock off the gardener and employ our boot-and-knife-cleaner as a substitute. He understands nothing of gardening work save digging, and this means that I have to crawl about before him and point out what he has to do. The worst of it is that I have to be so very careful to avoid cold-catching, for a chill might bring on my old trouble.

. . . The article on Raleigh's little book on Johnson appeared in the *Nation*. I could not get it to hang together properly, but I enjoyed writing it. I always love reading and writing about Johnson, and everybody who had to do with him. I care more for Mrs. Thrale and Fanny Burney and their 'goings-on' than for Professor Bain's *Mental and Moral Science* or his *Logic*, although the Professor is supposed to be the most eminent of Scotch philosophers since Hume. You will, I am afraid, consider this preference of Hester and Fanny to the great psychologist a sign of senile decay. I have not exaggerated Johnson's influence upon me, although I quite admit that it may be the consequence of personal peculiarity. We all of us take to those who answer *our* questions. They may not be the questions which other people are impelled to ask.

What a wonder the colours have been here ! You will perhaps recollect the old packhorse lane in our garden. It is hemmed in on either side by great trees, and it is now ankle-deep in leaves. Seen from the little window in my room, the gentle curves of the climbing road and the high banks on either side are a miracle. Where the banks are almost perpendicular the green moss shows through the gold.

. . . Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

66.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
Christmas Day [1910].

MY DEAR WEBB,

I suppose I ought to be rejoicing and on the look-out for 'herald angels'. But Christmas has never had much of a charm for me. Its gaiety is mostly fictitious.

I have no recollection whatever of seeing Wardle's *Holy Grail*. I have Sommer's edition of Caxton. It is in three quarto volumes, a thoroughly good book, uncastrated. I have read it two or three times with great profit and pleasure. The only other book on that subject which I know is *The Legend of Sir Gawaine*. I believe a man might spend a hardworking life in the study of these Arthurian stories. Nobody can tell their origin. Many of them probably had no definite beginning, but it seems to me as if the *Morte d'Arthur* must have been shaped by some one writer. It is a strange, very strange creation of a long while ago, for the scale of virtues is altogether different from our own. Some we have almost forgotten.

Tell me how you passed the gloomy time during the last month. I have had something of a relapse, and have been shut up in my room with depression and weariness as my unpleasant companions. To-day is brighter, the sun has begun to turn again, I have been out for a little walk and I am

better. I wish very much I could see you. I doubt if I shall get to 'Caxtons' any more. Molly sends her love to you. Dorothy would, I am sure, if she were here. Just before I was prevented from going downstairs I heard some delicious music by Mozart. I don't know if he is a friend of yours. He has always been one of my divinities.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE

67.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

8 February 1911.

MY DEAR WEBB,

You remember Mr. Laurence Turner, cabinet maker, in Lamb's Conduit Street, who made my bookcase from your design. I want now another bookcase, but smaller, in which to house my big *Oxford Dictionary*. Can you tell me if Turner is still alive and in business, and whether he would be competent to reduce your measurements, preserving the same pattern? To lessen the cost could I have the bookcase made in stained or painted deal?

A friend has sent me photographs of some of the statues in Strassburg Cathedral. They look modern to me and self-conscious. Do you know anything of them?

Farewell for the present. I hope you can remain

steadfast in the faith this sunless weather and that you have kept free of sickness.

Molly and Dorothy send their love to you. We have a new Bach which works wonders.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

68.

The Cottage,

Groombridge, Kent.

20 February 1911.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Two fingers of the right hand are disabled through gout or rheumatism or something inexplicable, and I am obliged to use pencil.

I agree with you gladly it will be better to wait, for I shall get you here.

Yes, I have read that wonderful passage from Mazzini. This kind of writing does not find favour now, because people do not feel what it says. Mazzini *did* feel up to that point or down to that depth. It is not understood that there are certain truths which justify expression in a dialect different from that of the House of Commons. I think I told you I once spent an evening with Mazzini when he was in hiding in Brompton. That must have [been] about five and thirty years ago.

Good-bye for the present. Do not forget. I shall expect you in about a fortnight.

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

69.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
8 April 1911.

MY DEAR WEBB,

You will not be surprised when I tell you that Dorothy and I were married this morning. . . . Everything will go on exactly as before.

As soon as it is warmer do come and hear some more Bach—such music!!

Your ancient and faithful friend,
W. HALE WHITE.

70.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
22 April 1911.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Next Tuesday week, we, that is to say, Molly, Dorothy, Nurse, and myself, are going for a fortnight to the house at Chelwood Gate, Ashdown Forest, which was lent to us, or rather to Dorothy, last year. You remember that in February you said you would come to Groombridge and discuss the bookcase. Will next week suit you, or would you prefer to see the Forest? We would meet you at Forest Row station, whence to Chelwood Gate is a drive of five miles. The only drawback to this suggestion is that you would not have the Dictionary before you, but I can give you measurements.

April 1911

381

Chelwood Gate is a wonderful place if only the horizon is clear.

. . . I have a multitude of letters to write before the next post, and can therefore do no more than assure you that, as of old, I am

Faithfully yours,

W. HALE WHITE.

71.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

24 July 1911.

MY DEAR WEBB,

When you see my handwriting I trust you will not for a moment suspect I want to poke you up in the matter of the bookshelf for the Dictionary. With perfect sincerity it is nothing of the sort, for I am not in the least bit of a hurry. My sole object is to know how you are, for it is now many weeks since I heard, and when you are silent for so long I get fidgety.

As to myself, I have no news to tell you, except that I am much worried with rheumatism which comes on about half an hour after I get to bed. If you have ever suffered from this trouble and have discovered a remedy, let me know. The doctor's stuff is of no use.

I picked up second-hand the other day a copy of Cobbett's *Rural Rides*. My father used to delight in that book. Did you ever read it? It is amazingly good stuff—so *juicy*.

Molly and Dorothy are well, but Molly feels the

heat. I have heard lately some more beautiful old music by Porpora—exquisite! Why these early Italian and French masters should be so little known I cannot conceive. Couperin is another, melodious, simple, delicate, no Wagnerian metaphysics, but just—MUSIC.

Faithfully everlastingly,

W. HALE WHITE.

[¹

Caxtons, Worth,
by Crawley, Sussex.

26 July 1911.

MY DEAR HALE WHITE,

I gladly read your handwriting again, to say nothing of the intelligence it brings: 'tis dated 24 July '11. The one preceding it is dated 22nd April '11, when you and yours were preparing to migrate for a while to Ashdown Forest: since then, the time has not been my own; for my brother had an apoplectic seizure on the 23rd of May.

Heard from one of the doctors on the 15th June that I should go to Winchester, and I stayed there for five days.

On the 30th telegram from the other doctor for me to return to Winchester, which I did, and the good old brother died on the 2nd of July, and happily without *acute* pain—throughout. He was in his eighty-fourth year, and we buried him on the

¹ On this sheet is inscribed: 'I hope this letter will never be destroyed by anybody who knew the writer or the person to whom it was written. W.H.W.' I therefore print it above.

7th July, in Winchester Cemetery. Even while the funeral service was proceeding, my attention wandered to the outlook, from the hill of white stone memorials, to one of the loveliest views over the vale between, and the higher hills beyond—a scene of perfect beauty. So we came away, and for a few days I did for the trustees what I could to help them in their offices, &c., &c.

There are two as yet who remain of the family, a sister aged eighty-five or eighty-six, and this pencil writer in his eighty-first year.

So, you will see or fancy me in this lovely weather (barring heat and drought) pondering over the ways and woes of life, and of the intense beauties this earth has, of making us forget the opposites; and yet, on my field paths of walking, I can sing myself into a peace of mind which makes amends—say—for *such* a parliamentary show as is proceeding at this time. Not that it is not interesting, for I find it highly so, *in a way*!!

Kind remembrance to you, and yours, and real rejoicing that music is so well to the front with you. I've only read of Porpora in the music dictionary, and in George Sand's story.

Yes, I too have always enjoyed Cobbett's *Rural Rides*, and especially about the lands around Winchester.

Yours always sincerely,

PHILIP WEBB.

P.S. I have not carelessly forgotten your painful rheumatism, but truly hope you soon will.]

72.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
27 July 1911.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I am writing in the garden, as our rooms are almost intolerable with the heat.

The news in your letter begot in me, as the like news always does, strange, shapeless states of mind which are not thoughts and therefore are unspeakable. Two facts come clearer into view—to wit—that you are in your eighty-first year and I am in my eightieth. Of these facts there is no doubt. What they mean neither you nor I know.

I rejoice in your ability to be happy in the society of beautiful things. I believe you have partly to thank your training for this blessing. You have been employed in creating beauty all your life, and therefore you are alive to it. I thank God I am not quite dead to it, and that, now I cannot walk much, it is not soon exhausted. There is a field just above me bordered with trees so lovely *always* that I feel it would be foolish to go to Switzerland. It is nothing but a common field, but until I have done with it why should I travel? I never shall have done with it.

. . . Faithfully—to the end—

W. HALE WHITE.

73.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

29 July 1911.

MY DEAR WEBB,

. . . Your letter hangs about me. I have a great many of your letters. As far as I can ensure their life they will be preserved, but I shall put up a special prayer for this last. It will show of what friendship I was considered worthy.

Faithfully always,

W. HALE WHITE.

74.

14 High Wickham, Hastings.

[September 1911.]

MY DEAR WEBB,

We have come here for a fortnight, partly to get rid of the effects of the heat, and partly because our well, never as yet known to give out, begins to show signs of failing and will now have a little rest. I wonder what your well is doing? Was there ever such a season! The hills here are about the colour of my brown hat. It is pitiable to see the poor sheep and cattle trying to pick up a living, and the rooks have a desperate time of it. I saw one the other day standing solitary in a field as hard as a rock, and looking round despairingly on this side and then on the other. I wonder if you have noticed one peculiarity in this drought—the failure of all usual signs of a break-up? The

glass has gone up and down, the wind has been in every quarter, but no rain. The 'sweet influences' of the Atlantic have gone from us. O to wake up at night and hear the storm threshing the window-panes, and to know that millions and millions of blades of grass are reviving! You cannot imagine how I love the wet south-west wind which *washes* everything and fills the water-courses.

The other day Dorothy's brother-in-law was at Groombridge. He was born at Knoyle, and his father is rector there now. He and the Wyndham children were playmates. He remembers the fire very well, and how they all had to help.¹ His name is Milford, and I am happy to say he speaks of you with great respect.

... Faithfully,

W. HALE WHITE.

75.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

31 October 1911.

MY DEAR WEBB,

If I did not wish to know how you are I would not write, for I have nothing particular to say. But I do earnestly wish to know, and I must therefore write. As life becomes shorter I cannot go for months without hearing something

¹ 'Clouds', see note, p. 332.

about you ; just a hail now and then, comforting me with the assurance that all is well.

I have thought of you during these glorious rains, such wealth, no stinting, and breaking loose just after the great drought. In about three months the springs will begin to feel drippings of what fell last week.

I got up at 4 o'clock last Friday morning to look for the comet, but the trees just hid it. I should have been obliged to walk a quarter of a mile up the road, and as it was very cold this was not quite safe. But the sky was good enough, no mist, not a cloud, Orion and all the other constellations blazing, Orion just beginning to turn towards his grave in the west. Such silence ! no distant noise of trains, not even a cat or dog, nothing but an owl.

What strange things came into my head !

I am sorry for your hearing, for the same trouble is beginning, or rather has a long while begun with me. . . . I have no difficulty, or scarcely any, if only one person is talking, but if two or three are speaking at once, it is all up with me. Happily, Bach and Beethoven are intelligible.

Have you noticed the fallen leaves this year, especially the beech ? I forget if you have much beech in your part of the world. The high winds have brought down quantities of maple leaves still green, so that under the trees we have heaps and layers of ruddy brown, yellow, red and green. With the sun on them, they are a sight. How well

I remember that morning at the Academy in 1856 when 'Autumn Leaves' was first shown!

Farewell. We all send our love to you.

Write soon.

Ever faithfully,

W. HALE WHITE.

76.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

22 December 1911.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I am in bed with rheumatic pain, rather sharp. There was a little rise in temperature, but it has now gone down. The doctor says that the cause is damp, and decaying leaves. I certainly never saw such a place for dead leaves. It is a mercy the soil is light sandrock.

My object in writing is to beg of you to send me half a dozen words telling me how you are. Do not think they need be many. Do not make a burden of them.

We have had a sad time here. A friend of ours from Ashted, named Partridge, came to spend the end of the week before last with us. She was seized with heart-failure late one night. We had to call up the doctor, get a nurse and telegraph for her sister. She is a little better now, but has to be kept perfectly quiet. She is seventy years old, and therefore we are naturally anxious.

What an autumn! We had one fine day when

all the Medway valley was flooded, and the river, thwarted by the narrow stone arches of the bridges, threw itself back against the main stream. It was most lovely. Imagine it thus.¹ This is Hendal



Bridge. A A is the curving bank. → → → is the current which the bank deflects. It blocks up the right-hand little arch and then swirls in all kinds of whirlpools and opposite currents till it is released through the other arches. All the meadows for a quarter of a mile across are covered with tawny water in which stand the trees and hedges.

Our love to you.

Faithfully yours,
W. HALE WHITE.

77.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
9 March 1912.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Some years ago you lent me a book on Scottish Border Architecture. I cannot remember

¹ The diagram is redrawn from my copy of the original, which is not now available for facsimile reproduction.

the author's name. If you still possess it, please lend it me again.

. . . Your ancient friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

78.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

19 March 1912.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Parker's book is in the London Library, and as I frequently get parcels from them I will not trouble you to bring it. I remember very well that you showed me a picture of a Border house which you said was interesting, because it was built at a time when a house must be protected, and the owner, nevertheless, wanted more comfort than was to be had in a castle intended in the first place for defence.

Do not make too much of the failure of memory. Partly it may be due to nervousness, and partly to worry when you find yourself forgetting. This only makes matters worse. I have had some awkward experiences of late when I have been unable to remember the names of people who have been talking to me. I have tried to lead the conversation up to a clue, and, if I did not succeed, there was nothing to be done but to escape as soon as possible.

I am still half crippled, and can do nothing more than hobble round the garden. This lameness is a great trial to me, for I used to depend much on

exercise and the open air. I should rejoice to see you—more than ever now as I am mostly shut up in a room.

My second son, Jack, the one who married Arthur Hughes's daughter, started last week for Chili to take charge of a railway there which crosses the Andes at a height of 12,000 feet. He has lived in Spain for the last fifteen years. I shall not see him again: at least it is not probable.

. . . Farewell to my dear friend.

W. HALE WHITE.

79.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

1 June 1912.

MY DEAR WEBB,

You did me more good yesterday than you know. I had been much depressed all day, but I was better directly I felt the touch of your hand on the hill. You ought to be very thankful for the preservation of your bodily and mental strength, and I know you are. As for me, I can see plainly now I shall never more than half recover from that horrible operation. What I went through, shut up in the nursing-home, mental horrors, bodily pain, has left too deep a mark.¹

Do come again soon.

Your faithful friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

¹ Does he not seek rather far here for the cause of a temporary fit of depression, his ancient enemy? It seems to me again a case of 'so he *would* write'. See note p. 357.

80.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.

31 July 1912.

MY DEAR WEBB,

I see a pencil notation on the review of Lord Coleridge's *Life* which you sent me that I am to keep it till you come. When will that be? I do not like to think that my visits to Worth are at an end. I believe that if I had a fly to take me from your house to the station, I could manage the walk the other way and look in upon you some afternoon between two and three.¹

No events to record. I am now sowing second

¹ I can find no record of a visit to Worth, save one in a letter of mine to my Mother in June of this year, when only Molly and I went, and we walked across the fields from the wonderful Anglo-Saxon Church to Mr. Webb's cottage, 'a real old cottage and he lives in it like a real old cottager, and draws his own water from the well. He gave us tea and then walked the whole way to Three Bridges to see us off'. And yet I have an odd sort of disjointed recollection of driving up from the station, all three of us, on some other occasion, of our sitting in the cottage, of Mr. Webb *not* being there, of the housekeeper, Mrs. Dickinson, and my husband's long talk with her, and the room rather dark; so much I may say for certain, and *some* of us presently on a little shade-checked lawn; but the lawn may have belonged to the visit with Molly, and Mr. Webb never distinctly appears; vaguely, he is out for a walk and not expecting us, and we wait and wait but he does not come—or he does, and seems to arrive in a kind of cloak or ulster, wet with a storm of rain, having sheltered in the hedges; and then, if that is so, the lawn may belong to this visit, but none of this is clear.

crops. The first have been utterly devoured by mice. We set traps and catch them by scores, but they do not abate. Can you suggest an exterminator?

Last week a curious thing happened. The lawn became suddenly covered with headless humblebees which had fallen from the trees. I sent a boxfull to a great authority on bees, and he says he never saw such a case before. He adds that during the last windy days his bees have been busy turning out the drones, which are eaten by wasps. The wasps feast on them. It is a very, very wonderful place, this world of ours, one which requires a good deal of explanation, which it won't get!

I have been reading Synge's *Aran* (not Arran) *Islands*. The Aran islands are in the Bay of Galway. I have read the book twice and I must read it again. It holds me, clutches me, I may say. It will not let me go. I am no critic, but for me it has rare qualities such as I have not found for many a day. Sorrow, sorrow that the man died so young. Perhaps, however, it was as well. He was saved from becoming literary. We all send our love. Do you care for Mozart? Dorothy has been practising one of his concertos, in which there are the most celestial melodies, the purest conceivable music.

Always your affectionate friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

81.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
14 October 1912.

MY DEAR WEBB,

It is as long ago as the 19th August¹ since you promised to come here as soon as some business in London was settled which you had in hand. Is there any chance of setting eyes on you? Unluckily, though, there is only one eye which I can set. The other was suddenly extinguished four or five weeks ago by rupture of a blood-vessel in the retina. You can hardly believe how awkward reading and writing are with only one eye.

If you will not venture, please do write to me. I eagerly inquired of a visitor from Crabbet, but could learn nothing of you.

We went to stay with Mrs. Dannreuther a little

¹ The date of the last letter preserved and I think the last received. On the letter my husband has pencilled 'Ans^d 14 Oct.', and below 'To Dickinson 29 Oct.' He wrote, I remember, to Mrs. Dickinson as he could obtain no news from his friend himself. She replied that his memory was now failing a good deal; she would remind him about writing and he would say 'Yes' and forget. Hence the last plea for 'a line from you' in the letter of 14 February. This loss of memory in his old friend troubled my husband very much. He used to refer to it with evident distress and I believe his thoughts must have been with him fairly often. 'The darkness climbs up in the east both for you and me, and soon it will be night.' On the 14 March, he himself, spared the mental decay which he sometimes dreaded, lay calm and most peacefully forgetful in that new and re-newed condition to which we have given the name of Death.

while ago, and while we were there Molly picked up influenza. We have managed to get her home, but she is still depressed and weak, although she is much better. Mrs. Dannreuther was exceedingly kind. She is a most generous creature, as you know, unstinting in her gifts, and particularly in taking trouble, never minding how much inconvenience her friends cause her.

Again I pray you, do come or write. I would not be so brief if I were not half-blind. A word or two from you, especially if I can *hear* it, will be very precious. Excuse the awkwardness with the pen. I cannot guide it properly.¹

We all send our love to you. As to myself particularly, you are most dear to me. Would that I were near to you!

W. HALE WHITE.

82.

The Cottage,
Groombridge, Kent.
14 February 1913.

MY DEAR WEBB,

Will you please let me have a line from you?

¹ I do not know if it is more fair or unfair to say that this is very clearly and well written! I find in one of my letters to my Father this October: 'I believe he is going to write to you; but when he is cager about anything and has a lot to say he always takes a long time explaining how impossible it is for him to set about it. He said this morning that it was so difficult for him now that he was so disabled! His very thoughts were impeded! "Look," he said, "with my hand so cramped—at least it isn't my hand, it's my eye!"'

Months upon months of this dreary winter have gone by, and you may have been suffering from all the troubles damp and fog often bring. As to myself, I have no particular news to tell you. The rheumatism and a disabled eye compel me to use pencil. The eye, however, is slowly getting better.

. . . I had a circular from Antiscrape to say that they were much in need of additional subscriptions. I raked about amongst people I knew and succeeded in getting five. I am rather proud.

I cannot write any more. Do not forsake me, there's a dear fellow.

Love from all three of us.

Your ever faithful friend,

W. HALE WHITE.

INDEX

- Abernethy, Dr., 35.
 Abbot Samson, 121.
 Acting, 8, 26-7, 30, 44-6.
 Addison, 256.
 Adeney, Dr., 357.
 Admiration and criticism, 90.
 Aeschylus, 241, 312.
 Alcohol, 77, 355.
 Alfoxden, 91, 182-4.
 Allen, George, 121, 141.
Ancient Mariner, The, 183.
 'Antiscrape, The', 323, 396.
 Appledore, 176.
 Architecture, 14, 67, 308-12,
 319, 322, 332, 345-6, 362-
 3, 389-90.
 Aristotle, *Politics*, 225, 227.
 Art, 165-6.
 Arthurian stories, 377.
 Ashdown Forest, 209, 280,
 370.
 Ashtead, 42, 149, 244.
 Astronomy, 31, 71, 298,
 327; and see Stars.
Athenaeum, The, 73, 122,
 157, 240, 259.
 Austen, Jane, 113, 220, 234.
 Axmouth, 319-20.

 Bach, 282, 289-90, 371-2,
 379-80, 387.
 Bacon, Lord, 48, 194, 213;
 Advancement of Learning,
 31.
 Bailey, C., 257.
 Bassenthwaite, 74.
 Bath, 113-14, 218, 220, 224,
 229.
 Bedford, 52, 201, 249, 328.
 Beethoven, 258, 372, 387.
 Bennett, Newton, 373.
 Bernhardt, Sarah, 8.

 Betham-Edwards, Miss, 56.
 Bible, *The*, 39, 86, 93, 146,
 148, 164, 194, 209, 222,
 224, 312; *New Test.*, 217;
 Old Test., 124, 176-8, 262;
 Ecclesiastes and *Job*, 166,
 173; *Ezekiel*, 189; *Gene-*
 sis, 148; *Leviticus* and
 Numbers, 261; *Isaiah*, 85;
 Epistle to Romans, 124;
 Revelation, 250.
 — Kautsch's translation of,
 176.
 — *for the Young*, 31.
 — Revised Version, 31, 86.
 Bible Class and Club, 268,
 274, 282-4, 360-1.
 Biography, 127.
 Bishop, Miss, 122, 236, 240
 (Mrs. Burke), 278, 285-7.
 Blackwell, Dr., 56.
 Blake, William, 262.
 Blunt, W. S., 306, 322, 335;
 Stealing of the Mare, 304.
 — Lady Anne, 304, 339, 358.
 Bolton Abbey, 316.
 Bouchurch, 323.
 Books, old and new, 71-2,
 107, 109, 194, 203-4, 253,
 257, 295, 307, 353, 373.
Bookman, The, 60, 116.
 Boswell, 42, 375; *Life of*
 Johnson and *Tour in the*
 Hebrides, 373.
 Botticelli, 186-7.
 Bournemouth, 53.
 Boyce, G. P., 245, 331-2.
 Bradlaugh, 24.
 Brantwood, 6.
 Bright, Mr. and Mrs. J. A.,
 66, 73, 132, 231.
British Weekly, The, 88.

- Brontë, C., 87; *Shirley* and *Jane Eyre*, 126.
 — E., 126.
 Browne, Sir T. and his son, 271.
 Browning, R., 31, 165, 172, 178, 187, 231, 234, 250; *Pippa Passes*, 292.
 Bunyan, 156, 345; *Pilgrim's Progress*, 168, 249-50, 327.
 — his portrait, 64 note.
 Burne-Jones, 56, 301, 326; *Life*, 245, 329-30.
 — Lady, 329-30, 340.
 Burney, Fanny, 376.
 Burns, John, 334.
 — Robert, 156.
 Byron, 22, 109, 167.
 Calumny, 187.
 Cambridge, 156, 227.
 Campbell, J. Dykes, 92.
 Carlyle, T., 2, 7, 12, 24, 55, 84, 106-7, 146, 170, 173, 193, 205, 245, 260, 331; *Reminiscences and Letters*, 84, 194; *Frederick the Great*, 67; *Life of Sterling*, 139, 251.
 — his mother, 7, 84.
 — Froude's *Life of*, 70, 82.
 — Mrs., 8, 193-4; *Miss Jewsbury's Letters to*, 61.
 'Caxtons', 305.
 Cecil, Lady Robert, 280-2, 291, 370.
 Censure of others, 42, 244, 261.
 Chamberlain, J., 98, 120, 192, 216.
 Charmouth, 100-1.
 Chelwood Gate, 380-1.
 Chopin, 372, 374.
 Christianity, 7, 8, 124, 146, 211-12, 217, 337.
 Christmas, 377.
 Church of England, 30, 72, 123, 129, 133, 142, 159-64, 198, 249-50, 258, 273, 277, 360.
 Church of Rome, 14, 16, 21, 82, 110-11, 122-3, 125, 240, 242, 278-9, 287, 290, 351.
 — bells, 220, 316.
Clarissa, Harlowe, 95, 288.
 Clarkson, Catherine, 116, 321.
 Class distinctions, 61-2.
 Clerical subscription, 159-64.
 'Clouds', 332, 386.
 Cobbett, *Rural Rides*, 381, 383.
 Cobden - Sanderson, Mrs., 141-2.
 — Sickert, Mrs., 257, 322.
 Cockerell, Mr. S. C., 293 note.
 Cockermouth, 58, 79.
 Colchester, 60, 110.
 Cole, Vicar, 61.
 Colenutt, Richard, 1, 58, 59, 84, 107, 138; ancestry, 4, 77, 81, 303; Mayor and magistrate, 38, 46; illness and death, 102-3, 199, 303-4.
 — Mrs., 58, 83, 105-7, 138, 199, 246-7, 304, 347.
 — Mr. and Mrs., Daughters of: Mrs. Gurnell, 1, 9, 87-8; Mrs. Wright, 8, 11, 27-8, 95, 118.
 Coleridge, S. T., 90, 92, 117, 163, 174, 183.
 Cologne Cathedral, 21.
 Conceit, 124, 173-4, 227.
 Constable, Mr. Archibald, 113, 218.
 — Rev. Thomas, 105.
 Convictions, 140, 162, 214.
 Corelli, 282, 372.
 Cornaro, 36.
 Couperin, 382.
 Courage, 105, 343-4.
 Crowborough, 101, 104, 117, 203-13.
 Cycling, 33-4.

- Dannreuther, Mrs., 56, 146,
 150, 339, 352, 394-5.
 Dante, 269; *Convito*, 239;
Divine Comedy, 147; *Vita*
Nuova, 238-9.
 Death, 106, 134-5, 139, 141,
 151, 200, 204, 270, 337,
 359, 394 note.
 De Morgan, W., 343.
 Dickens, 116; *Christmas*
Carol, 31; *Old Curiosity*
Shop, 109.
Dictionary of National Bio-
graphy, 313.
 Diet, 35-6, 128-9.
 Dissent, 72, 133, 249.
 Division of labour, 18-19.
 Dogs, 144, 186, 303, 305.
 Dorian mode, 225, 227.
 Dorking, 153.
 Doughty, C. M., *Arabia De-*
serta and Dawn in Britain,
 295.
 Drought, 385.
 Dumas, 288.
 Duty as a motive, 23-4.

 Eastbourne, 229-30.
 Education Bill, 133; 136.
 — of children, 208-9, 219,
 232-3.
 — of women, 31, 64.
 — University, 156-7, 163.
 Egotism, 124.
 Eliot, George, 87, 180-1, 204;
Mill on the Floss, 181.
 Elizabethan age, and 1775-
 1895, 72.
 Ellacombe, Rev. H. N., *In a*
Gloucestershire Garden and
Plant-love of Shakespeare,
 109.
 Elstow, 328.
 Emerson, 5, 7, 60.
 Etchingham, 355.
 Euripides, 300.
 Exeter Cathedral bells, 316.
 Expression, 206, 274 note.
 Exmoor, 367.

 Falstaff, 187-8.
 Faraday, M., 41 note.
 Fielding, 95.
 Forge, The, 374.
 France, 125.
 Frazer, Dr. J. G., *The Golden*
Bough and Pausanias, 334.
 Freeman, *Schools of Hellas*,
 256.
 Freiburg, 14-15.
 Friendship, 1, 46, 56, 84-5,
 139, 146, 195, 236, 347,
 385.
 Fripp, Miss (Lady W. Hale
 White), 25-6, 32, 73, 76.
 Froude's *Life of Carlyle*, 7, 8,
 70, 84, 194.

 'Gale', 279, 291, 370.
 Galileo, *Life of*, 122, 237,
 239-40.
 Gardening, 44, 57, 109, 197,
 226, 234, 282, 324, 375.
 Gaskell, Mrs., *The Moorland*
Cottage, 140.
 George, H., *Progress and*
Poverty, 10.
 Germany, visit to, 12-22.
 — military ways in, 15;
 education, 15; architec-
 tural remains, 14; inex-
 pensive living, 14, 17.
 Gibbs, James, 308.
 Gilchrist, *Life of Blake*, 262.
 Goethe, 147, 170, 173, 228,
 317, 332, 368; *Theory of*
Colours, 278-9, 368.
 Good and evil, 95-6, 121,
 326.
 Gorlof, Gen. de, 125, 204.
 Grant, *History of Physical*
Astronomy, 238.
 Green's *History of England*,
 31.

- Groombridge, 118-20, 141.
— Place, 322.
- Hall, Fielding, *The Soul of a People*, 194.
- Hare, A. J. C., *Cities of Central Italy*, 324.
— J. C., *Memoir of Sterling*, 139.
- Harrison, Frederick, 112.
- Hastings, 54-5, 72, 94, 100, 186.
- Hazlitt, 187-9.
- Heidelberg, 13-14.
- Hendal Bridge, 331, 389.
- Heredity, 77, 190.
- Heroism, 113.
- Hobbes, T., 35.
- Holbein, 293, 352.
- Holyoake, 68, 111.
- Homer, 62, 312, 342.
- Horace, 157, 165.
- Housekeeping, 74, 89-90, 105, 188, 199, 210-11, 226, 259.
- Hughes, Arthur, 10, 391.
— Agnes, Miss, 43 (Mrs. J. H. White), 58.
- Hugo, Victor, *Les Misérables*, 57.
- Hunt, Holman, 245, 372.
- Hutchinson, T., 2.
- Huxley, T. H., 41 note, 111, 300; *Physiography*, 31.
- Hyndman, 24.
- Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, 44-6; *Pillars of Society*, 45-6; *Rosmersholm*, 47.
- Ilkley, 38-40.
- Inchbold, J. W., 333.
- Inge, Dean, 293.
- Incarnation, The, 218-19.
- Inconsistency, 48, 123, 198.
- Indifference, 198.
- Jealousy, 270 note, 285-6.
- Jeaffreson, *The Real Lord Byron*, 22.
- Jefferies, Richard, 36-8; *Wild Life in a Southern County*, 38; *Field and Hedgerow*, 43.
- Jenkinson, Miss, 252, 258-9; her father, 295.
- Joan of Arc, 325-6, 350-1.
- Johnson, Dr., 42, 247, 375-6.
- Jones, Mr. H. A., 66; *Hoodman Blind*, 30.
- Jowett, Benjamin, 160 note, 164, 257.
- Justice, 24.
- Keats, 156.
- Keighley, 39-40.
- Kempis, Thomas à, 181, 249.
- Kenyon, Sir F., 194.
- Keynotes, 72.
- Kingsley, Charles, 142, 164.
- Lamb, Charles, 90.
- Landor, W. S., 113, 201, 220, 274.
- Lavengro, 48.
- Law, W., *Serious Call*, 249.
- Lethaby, Prof., 309-12, 314, 345, 371; *Education in Building*, 309; *Theory of Greek architecture and Greek Building*, 362-3.
- Lewes, Mrs., 87, 180.
- Lloyd, Guy, 154, 260.
- Local Veto, 72.
- Loisy, *L'Evangile et l'Eglise*, 243.
- London, 54, 71, 215, 314.
- Lorna Doone, 367.
- Lost Love, A, 11.
- Lucretius, 168, 228.
- Luther, 13, 16.
- Lyme Regis, 99, 114, 224.
- Lyrical Ballads, 91, 183.
- Maccall, William, 40; *Lost Edens*, 4.

- Mackail, Prof., 359.
 Maitland, Miss, 64, 145.
 Malory, *Morte d'Arthur*, 299, 377.
 Malvolio, 188.
 Marie Antoinette, 17.
Marie Claire, 290.
 Marsh, Mabel (Mrs. Guy Lloyd), 145, 154, 182-3, 205-7, 218-19, 234-5, 260.
 Maurice, F. D., 164.
 Mazzini, 193, 260, 379.
 Memory, 142, 342, 351, 354, 366, 390, 394 note.
 Metaphysics, 169.
 Meynell, Viola and *Martha Vine*, 287-8, 290.
 Michael Angelo, 329.
 Middle-age, 34.
 Milford, H. S., 386.
 — Mrs., 265.
 Mill, J. S., 236; *Letters*, 280.
 Millais, 30, 82, 301, 388.
 Milton, 156, 171, 194, *Paradise Lost*, 30, 147-9, 225; *Epitaphium Damonis*, 152.
Miss Mona, 253, 265.
 Modjeska, Madame, 8.
 Monotony, 19, 68, 119, 356, 366.
 Montaigne, 227.
 Morley, Lord, 112.
Morning Leader, 101.
 Morphia, 356-7.
 Morris, Caleb, 114, 223.
 — William, 24, 56, 79, 155-6, 297, 313, 326, 346; *Earthly Paradise*, 332.
Morte D'Arthur, 299, 377.
 Motor cars, 119, 136, 137, 255, 334, 369.
 Mozart, 175, 180, 258, 296, 378, 393.
 Müller, Max, 207.
 Munro, Neil, *Gilian the Dreamer*, 257.
 Murray, Douglas, *Joan of Arc*, 325.
Nation, The, 375.
 Newman, Francis, 68.
 Newton, Sir Isaac, 278.
 Nicoll, Sir W. R., 362.
 Nietzsche, 260.
 Noel, Miss Irene, 339, 341, 358.
 Northiam, 92.
 Norton, Prof. C. E., 84, 194.
 Oast Houses, 371.
 Oratory, 223.
 Oriental races, 125, 336.
 Ostentatious wealth, 89, 255, 329, 374.
 Oswell, Mrs., 142, 354.
 Ottley, Dr., *History of the Hebrews*, 224.
 'Ouida', 306.
 Ouse, 281, 328.
 Owen, Sir R., 41 note.
 Oxford, 146, 156, 163, 226-7, 359.
 — Dictionary, *The*, 378, 381.
 Palestine, 86, 309.
 Partridge, Miss, 144, 236, 261, 267, 388.
 — Miss A. J., 241.
 — Miss E., 147, 150-1, 200-1.
 Pisano, 338.
 Plato, *Republic*, 227; *The Statesman*, 310.
 Plutarch, 147.
 Political Economy, 10, 99.
 Politics, 47, 112, 132, 193-4, 211, 335 note.
 Porpora, 289, 382-3.
 Prejudice, 64.
 Pre-Raphaelitism, 260, 330.
 Principles, 69.
 Problems, Insoluble, 48, 80-1, 191.
 Punishment, 230, 269.
 Quantocks, 91, 182 note; *The Quantocks and their Associations*, 221.

- Quo Vadis* (H. Sienkiewicz), 224.
- Raleigh, Prof. Sir W. A., 263, 376.
- Ranmore, Common, 154.
- Rayleigh, Lord, 278, 368.
- Reason, 79.
- Religion, 84, 148, 176-7, 185, 193, 209, 212, 228, 231, 236-7, 240, 257, 264-5, 268, 273, 276, 280, 337, 372; 'Natural Religion', 107, 129, 222.
- Renan, 250.
- 'Respectability', 213-14 311.
- Retrospect, 55, 102, 201.
- Restriction, 284.
- Reynolds, Sir J., 338.
- Rhine, 13, 15, 19-21.
- Rossetti, D. G., 56, 82, 91, 239, 245, 260, 369.
- Christina, 268.
- Maria, 268-9.
- Rossini, 175, 180.
- Ruskin, 6, 52, 60, 72, 81, 99, 106, 121, 123, 153, 170, 240, 260, 263 note, 332; *Poems*, 52.
- Russia, 125, 131.
- Rydal Mount, 6.
- Ryde, 3, 52, 65, 114.
- Ryuji Tanabé, 252.
- Sabatier, 242, 299.
- Saint, Miss, 236, 240, 276, 322.
- St. Francis, 242-3, 249, 324; *Mirror of Perfection*, 299.
- St. Leonards, 134, 354.
- St. Paul, 124.
- Salisbury, Lord, 151.
- Sand, George, 146; *Consuelo*, 59, 289, 383.
- Sandown, 108, 134.
- Sargeaunt, Nurse, 347.
- Satan, 148.
- Scarlatti, 282, 372.
- Scepticism, 166, 173.
- Scilly, 12, 25.
- Scott, Sir Walter, 48, 109, 358; *Fair Maid of Perth*, 317; *Monastery, The*, 358; *Redgauntlet*, 59; *Life, Letters and Journal*, 130, 358.
- Schreiner, 101.
- Science and theology, 151.
- Sea, 22, 96, 108, 133, 141, 167, 323, 350.
- Selborne, White's, 109.
- Sermons, 3, 21, 30, 140.
- Sewell, W., 88, 137.
- Miss, 137.
- Shakespeare, 26-7, 44, 48, 91, 156, 194, 353; *Hamlet*, 232; *Othello*, 286; *Winter's Tale*, 286.
- Shelley, 34, 60, 153, 167, 224; *Ode to the West Wind* and *The Skylark*, 172; *Laon and Cythna*, 178.
- Sidgwick, Henry, *Life of*, 275-7.
- Sienkiewicz, *Quo Vadis*, 224.
- Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Horace, 264, 360.
- Dorothy V., 253-5, 258, 264-289 *passim*, 360-1, 365, 371 (Mrs. White), 289-296 *passim*, 380, 393.
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 316, 323, 346, 396.
- Somersetshire Tragedy, 221.
- Sophocles, 244.
- South-west wind, 57, 143, 349, 386.
- Southwold, 267.
- Speaker, The*, 122, 237.
- Spectator, The*, 251, 256.
- Spectroscope, 66.
- Speldhurst, 326.
- Spenser, 156; *Faery Queen*, 295.
- Spinoza, 11, 61, 63, 150.
- Stars, 65-6, 88, 105, 131, 177, 209, 327, 366, 387.
- Steele, 251, 256.
- Stephen, Leslie, 188-9, 259.

- Sterling, J., 139.
 Stirling, Hutchison, Miss, 63.
 Strassburg Cathedral, 378.
 Strikes, 374.
 Suffrage, Woman's, 142.
 Sunday, 65.
 Sunningwell, F. W. Cornish,
 197-8, 201.
 Supernatural, The, 246-7.
 Swinburne, 90-1, 111, 116,
 124, 126-7, 185, 260, 326,
 350, 361-2; *A Carol for*
Charity, 130; *Altar of*
Righteousness, 124; *Essay*
on Blake, 263; *on Shake-*
speare, 359-60; *Stratford*
on Avon, 111; *The Sisters*,
 134; *The Seamew and A*
Word with the wind, 126;
Tragedies, 132.
 — Mackail's Essay on, 359,
 361.
 Symonds, Addington, Mrs.,
 224.
 Sygne, J. M., *Avon Islands*,
 393.
 Tauler, 215, 249.
 Taylor, Sir H., 173.
 Telescope, 44-5, 88, 175.
 Tennyson, 21, 28, 60, 90,
 106-7, 148, 153, 165-70,
 172, 260, 374; *In Me-*
moriæ, 115, 169, 173;
Lucretius, 168; *Maud*, 168,
 330; *May Queen*, 173;
Passing of Arthur, 251;
Princess, 171-2; *Will*, 142.
 — Mrs. Arthur, 115-17, 228,
 321.
 Theology, 139, 151, 160, 163.
 Thompson, Silvanus, 278,
 368.
 Thrale, Mrs., 376.
 Thunderstorms, 292, 357,
 370.
 Tolstoy, 174, 179, 360; *The*
Power of Darkness, 327.
 Trees, 119, 341, 352, 355,
 368-9, 376, 384, 387.
 Trench, R. C. 142.
 'Trippers', 63, 94, 100, 185-6.
 Tudor Exhibition, 293.
 Turner, Hawes, 226.
 — Mrs., 252.
 — Laurence, 378.
 — Thackeray, 308, 316.
Twelve years with my Boys,
 283.
 Tyndall, J., 8, 41 note.
 Tyrrell, Father, 236, 240,
 257, 285, 287.
 Unitarians, 149.
 'Unquenchableness', 67.
 Veracity, 160-1.
 Verrall, A. W., *Euripides the*
Rationalist, 299-300.
Vicar of Wakefield, The, 196.
 Victorian age, 79, 170.
 Virgil, 146, 152-3, 157, 169.
 Voltaire, 300.
 Wagner, 175, 179-80, 382.
 Walker, Emery, 312, 338.
 — Fred, 82.
 Ward, Mrs. Wilfrid, *Great*
Possessions, 279.
 War, 125.
 — South African, 98, 101,
 112, 192, 195, 216, 330, 336.
 — Russo-Japanese, 125.
 — Sudan (1885), 29, 226.
 Watts-Dunton, 90, 361.
 Webb, Philip, 79 note, 268,
 297, 344-5, 382-3.
Wesley Journal, 93-4.
 Westminster Abbey, 312, 314,
 345-6.
 Whitaker's *History of the*
Craven Hundred, 315.
 Whitby, 96-7, 99.
 White, W. Hale:
 — His father, 248-9, 311,
 381; his mother, 110; his

- sister, 129; his first wife, 3, 32, 41, 46, 49-50; eldest son, 6, 25, 51, 77-8, 85; second son, 43, 58, 62, 70, 78, 82, 98, 110, 391; third son, 41, 52, 95, 198, 318; daughter, 26, 31, 46, 140, 143, 157, 231, 270, 332, 348, 360, 366; grand-children, 47, 49, 76, 86, 99, 123, 131, 188; nephew, 76.
- Visits Germany, 12-22; leaves Carshalton, 42; leaves Ashted, 54, 144; retires from Admiralty, 55; leaves Hastings, 101; leaves Crowborough, 118; second marriage, 289, 291; health, 12, 23, 35, 41, 75, 96, 158, 196, 348; depression, 29, 38, 40, 125, 266, 349, 356; suffers from cold, 113-14, 117, 218, 305, 318, 321; dreads loss of faculties, 106, 108, 219, 394 note.
- Refers to English birth and breeding, 85; to boyhood, 256; expulsion from College, 164; extempore speaking, 3; 'wretched temperament', 28, 271, 276, 364; 'dullness', 206; 'self-ignorance', 26; irresolution, 175; caution, 32; disinclination to move, 68, 71, 78, 82, 97, 117, 126, 141, 150, 318.
- Refers to his writings; *A forgotten Book*, 88; *Autobiography*, 11; *Bunyan*, 127, 327; *Charge of Apostasy*, 340, 362 note; *Caleb Morris*, 114, 223; *Coleridge Facsimile*, 93; *Dorothy Wordsworth's Letters*, 122; *George Eliot*, 116; *Growth of a Legend*, 73; *How can we tell?* 122, 237, 239-40; *John Chapman*, 71; *Dr. Johnson*, 375-6; *Judas Iscariot*, 202; *Review of Miss Mona*, 265; *Our Debt to France*, 60; *Preface to Carlyle's Sterling*, 139, 251; *Revision of 'Wordsworth' in the D.N.B.*, 188; *Selections from Rambler*, 247, 337; *Review of Spinoza*, 259; *Spinoza*, 61, 63, 150; *Mr. Whittaker's Retirement*, 181; *Wilsonian Theory of Sunspots*, 71; *Wordsworth and Coleridge MSS.*, 84, 157, 362.
- His personal appearance, 1, 64 note; orderliness, 2; penmanship, 112, 158, 395 note; thoroughness, 71, 328; secrecy, 11; humility, 127, 165, 181, 247, 251, 279, 328; love of beauty, 58-9, 209, 368-70, 384; restlessness, 97, 203, 215, 267.
- Whitechapel Exhibition, 244.
- Whitman, Walt, 149.
- Wilkins, M. E., *A Humble Romance and A Far-away Melody*, 59.
- Winchelsea, 67-8, 323, 325.
- Winchester, 382-3.
- Wootton Bridge, 64, 114.
- Wordsworth, W., 2, 6, 89, 90, 124, 183, 188, 221.
- Dorothy, 116-7, 122, 183, 228-9, 240, 321.
- Worsley's *History of the Isle of Wight*, 4.
- Worth, 305, 323, 392.
- Yorkshire, 38-40, 96.
- Zola, 327.
- Zurich, 20.



62

92

White, W.H.

W584

Letters to three friends

92

W584

